CHATHAM

HIS EARLY LIFE AND CONNECTIONS

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BY

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To

BEVILL FORTESCUE

OF DROPMORE AND BOCONNOC,

THIS BOOK, WHICH OWES EVERYTHING TO HIM,

IS

GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

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PREFACE

MY first words of preface must be of excuse for some apparent lack of gratitude in my dedication. For besides my debt to Mr. Fortescue, I owe my warmest acknowledgments to Mary, Lady Ilchester, and her son, for the permission to examine some of the papers of Henry Fox; a character of great interest, whose life is yet to be written. But I hope that this will soon be presented by Lord Ilchester, whose capacity for such work is already proved. I render my sincere thanks both to him and to his mother; but my dedication, written long before I had access to the Holland House papers, must remain unchanged; for without Mr. Fortescue's family collection of papers at Dropmore this book could never have been begun.

The life of Chatham is extremely difficult to write, and, strictly speaking, never can be written at all. It is difficult because of the artificial atmosphere in which he thought it well to envelop himself, and because the rare glimpses which are obtainable of the real man reveal a nature so complex, so violent, and so repressed. What is this strange career?

Born of a turbulent stock, he is crippled by gout at Eton and Oxford, then launched into a cavalry regiment, and then into Parliament. For eight years he is groom-in-waiting to a prince. Then he holds subordinate office for nine years more. Then he suddenly flashes out, not as a royal attendant or a minor placeman, but as the people's darling and the champion of the country. In obscure positions he has become the first man in Britain, which he now rules absolutely for four years in a continual blaze of triumph. Then he is sacrificed to an intrigue, but remains the supreme statesman of his country for five years more. Then he becomes Prime Minister amid general acclamation; but in an instant he shatters his own power, and retires, distempered if not mad, into a cell. At last he divests himself of office, and recovers his reason; he lives for nine years more, a lonely, sublime figure, but awful to the last, an incalculable force. He dies, practically, in public, as he would have wished; and the nation, hoping against hope, pins its faith in him to the hour of death.

And for most of the time his associations are ignoble, if not humiliating. He had to herd with political jobbers; he has to serve intriguing kinsfolk; he had to cringe to unworthy Kings and the mistresses of Kings; he is flouted and insulted by a puppet whig like Rockingham. Despite all this he bequeaths the most illustrious name in our political history; and it is the arduous task of his biographer to show how these circumstances led to this result.

Happily this task does not fall to the present writer, who has only to describe the struggle and the ascent; the consummation and glory of the career lie beyond these limits.

Further, it may be said that not merely is the complete life of Chatham difficult to write, but impossible. It is safe, indeed, to assert that it never has been written and never can be written.

This seems a hard saying, for it appears to be a reflection on his numerous biographers from Thackeray to Von Ruville, though it is nothing of the sort. The fact is that the materials do not exist. For the first time the Dropmore papers throw some light on the earlier part of his life. But it is tolerably certain that nothing of this kind exists to illuminate his later years. Of his conversations, of his private life nothing, or little more than nothing, remains. Except on the one genial occasion on which Burke saw him tooling a jim-whiskey down to Stowe, we scarcely see a human touch. After his accession to office in 1756, his letters of pompous and sometimes abject circumlocution, intended partly to deceive his correspondent and partly to baffle the authorities of the Post Office, give no clue to his mind. He wrote an ordinary note as Rogers wrote an ordinary couplet. Even his love-letters are incurably stilted. There is no ease, no frankness, no self-revelation in anything that he wrote after he embarked actively in politics. From that time he shrouded himself carefully and successfully from his contemporaries, except on the occasions when he appeared in public; for, strange to say, it was in his speeches that his nature sometimes burst forth. And yet even here, there is trouble. One of the difficulties of a life of Chatham lies in the rough notes of his speeches preserved by Horace Walpole. They are often confused, often dreary, sometimes incomprehensible; but they must be included, for there is nothing else; though they weigh heavy on a book. Sometimes, however, they reveal a flash of the man, and Pitt permits little else. Such being his deliberate scheme of life, adopted partly from policy, partly from considerations of health, there seems little more material for a biography of the man, apart from his public career, than exists in the case of a Trappist.

It is then, I think, safe to predict that the real life of Chatham can never be written, as the intimate facts are wanting. What survive were, as usual, exhausted by Macaulay in those two brilliant essays, in which with the sure grasp of historical imagination he depicted the glowing scenes of Chatham's career, and left to posterity the portrait which will never be superseded. For his instinct supplies the lack of evidence, and though there may be exaggeration of praise, that praise will not be seriously diminished. Lives of Chatham will always be written, because few subjects are more interesting or more dramatic, but they must always be imperfect. It is, of course, easy to record his course as a statesman, his speeches, his triumphs, his achievements; and these narratives will be called biographies. But will they ever reveal the real man?

There seems to be a constant tendency in writers to forget that the provinces of history and biography, though they often overlap, are essentially distinct; for history records the life of nations, and biography the life of individuals. To set forth the annals of the time in which the hero has existed, and to note his contact with them, is only a part of his life, though it is often held to be all that is worth remembering. The life of any man that ever lived on earth is far more than his public career. The life of a man is not his public life, which is always alloyed with some necessary diplomacy and which is sometimes only a mask; it is made up of a thousand touches, a multitude of lights and shadows, most of which are invisible behind the austere presentment of statecraft. We have probably all, and perhaps more than all, that Shakespeare ever wrote; we have so to speak all his public life. But would we not gladly give one or two of his plays to obtain some true insight into his private life, to realise the humanity of this superhuman being, to know how this immortal was linked to mortality? We want to know how a master man talked, and, if possible, what he thought; what was his standpoint with regard to the grave issues of life; what he was in his hours of ease, what he enjoyed, how he unbent; in a word, what he was without his wig and bag and sword, in his dressing-gown and slippers, with a friend, a novel, or a pipe. This is half or three parts of a man, and it is certain that we shall never know this aspect of Chatham. He would no doubt, had it served his purpose, have appeared in the dressing-gown and slippers, but the array would have been as solemn and artificial as the robes of a cardinal. He would, had it served his purpose, have smoked a pipe, but it would have been the jewelled nargileh of the Grand Mogul. He had practically no intimates; his wife told nothing, his children told nothing; he revealed himself neither by word nor on paper, he deliberately enveloped himself in an opaque fog of mystery; and there seems no clue or channel by which any further detail of his character can reach us, unless Addington, the doctor, or Wilson, the tutor, have anything to tell us. But did anything of the kind survive, we feel confident that it would have transpired. Beckford and Potter, Barré and Camden, his friends or sycophants or satellites, have left no sign. Shelburne indeed thinks that he penetrated Chatham, and Shelburne no doubt saw him under circumstances of comparative intimacy. And yet, judging by the result, it may well be doubted whether Shelburne did more than watch and guess, with an inkling of spite. Occasionally there is a legend, a tradition, or an anecdote, but Chatham seems to have cut off all vestiges of his real self as completely as a successful fugitive from justice. And so posterity sees nothing but the stern effigy representing what he wished, or permitted, or authorised to be seen. This is not enough or nearly enough, but it must now be certain that there will never be much more. This makes us all the more grateful for the Dropmore papers and for Mr. Fortescue's liberality. He has been able to throw new light on Chatham's youth and on his unrestrained days. Light on the subsequent years of self-repression would be so guarded and shaded that we should scarce obtain a glimpse of the true man. Indeed, by his careful disguise Chatham has made himself a prehistoric or rather a prebiographical figure, a man of the fifteenth century or earlier. We know what was around him, the scene on which he played, the other actors in the great drama, and we recognise himself on the stage; but away from the footlights he remains in darkness. In a word, after 1756, when this book ends, his public life is conspicuous and familiar. But his inner life after that period will never be known; and so we must be content with a torso.

October 1910.

It has seemed unnecessary to give references to familiar printed authorities, such as Horace Walpole, Coxe, Harris's Life of Hardwicke, Waldegrave, or the published Dropmore MSS. But where an exception has been deemed necessary, 'Orford' refers to the 'Memoirs,' and 'Walpole' denotes an allusion to the 'Letters.'

Lord Camelford's manuscript, which I have used so copiously, is an intimate family document entitled 'Family Characters and Anecdotes,' addressed to his son, and dated 1781.

CHATHAM

HIS EARLY LIFE AND CONNECTIONS

CHAPTER I.

THERE is one initial part of a biography which is skipped by every judicious reader; that in which the pedigree of the hero is set forth, often with warm fancy, and sometimes at intolerable length. It is, happily, not necessary to enter upon the bewildering branches of the innumerable Pitts, but only to keep to one conspicuous stem. We must however record that the Pitt family was gentle and honourable; 'it had,' says one of them, 'been near two centuries growing into wealth without producing anything illustrious.'[1] But in the eighteenth century it was destined to blossom into no less than four peerages, Londonderry, Rivers, Camelford, and Chatham, not one of which survives. William Pitt's great-grandfather was Vicar of Blandford in Dorsetshire; and there was born Thomas, his grandfather, better known as Governor Pitt, and associated in history with the famous Pitt diamond. The Vicar, being the younger son of a younger son, had no fortune but the advowson of his own living of St. Mary; and Thomas again being a younger son set forth to seek his fortunes in the Golden East, and, it may be added, found them there.

Of this redoubtable progenitor, Governor Pitt, as he was always called, it would be possible to say much, as his life, measured by the length of current biographies, would justify a volume; in any case it is necessary to say something, for in his character may be traced some germs of his grandson's intractable qualities.

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[1] Camelford.

We first catch sight of him as an 'interloper,' that is, an illicit merchant carrying on trade in violation of the East India Company's monopoly. In that capacity he showed himself formidable and intrepid, 'of a haughty, huffying, daring temper,'[1] and the Company waged unsparing war against him. In a letter to their agents, writing with special reference to him, they say: 'We have a most acceptable accompt of the flourishing condition of all our affaires in those parts, and of the wreck and disappointment of all the interlopers; insomuch that if you have done your parts in reference to the *Crowne*, that Tho. Pitts went upon, there is no probability (that) of seven interloping ships that went to India the same year that our Agent did, any one ship will ever come to England again; and . . . wee cannot doubt that you will in due time render us as pleasing an accompt of those interlopers that went out this year, which will certainly put an end to that kind of robbery.'[2] And so these hostilities continued for more than a score of years, but without the suppression of Pitt, who appears to have greatly thriven in the process; for during the latter part of this period he was member of Parliament for his own pocket borough of Old Sarum,[3] bought out of these contraband gains. Victory, indeed, rested with him; for the Company, weary and baffled, determined, on the faith of an ancient but precarious principle, to set a thief to catch a thief; and in November 1697 appointed Pitt governor of Fort St. George, though some fastidious stockholders protested. This 'roughling immoral man,' as one of the objectors called him, governed with a high and strong hand from 1698 to 1709; when the Company, finding the burden of him intolerable, summarily dismissed him. He was, no doubt, like his grandson, a difficult servant; and in his career we see the source of that energy, haughtiness, and self-reliance which were so conspicuous in both. Lord Camelford, his great-grandson, though a relentless critic of his family, gives, in the grateful character of an heir, a leniently appreciative account of the Governor; and says that 'he amassed a fortune which was reckoned prodigious in those times without the smallest stain on his reputation. I have heard (but at what exact period of his life I know not) that, having accomplished such a sum as he thought would enable him to pass the remainder of his days in peace, he was taken prisoner, together with the greatest part of his effects, on his return to England, and released at the intercession of the Duchess of Portsmouth, who was then in France. He went back to India and made in a shorter time a much larger fortune from the credit he had established and the experience he had acquired.'

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[1] Diary of William Hedges, III. x.

[2] Hedges, III. xii.

[3] He purchased it from Lord Salisbury about 1690. Hedges, III. xxx.

However that may be, he now returned promptly to 1710 England, by way of Bergen, having shipped on a Danish vessel, and having sent before him in the heel of his son's shoe[1] the precious chattel which made his name famous, until, under his descendants, it acquired a different lustre.

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[1] The portrait of the Governor at Boconnoc represents him with the diamond in his hat. That at Chevening with the diamond in his own shoe.

This was a prodigious diamond, to which he alludes in his correspondence as his 'grand concern,' which he bought for 48,000*l.*, and sold, after keeping it for some sixteen years, to the Regent of Orleans for the French Crown. It was rather a sonorous than a profitable bargain, for though he sold it for 133,000*l.*, he was never paid in full. He received 40,000*l.* and three boxes of jewels, but the balance, calculated at 20,000*l.*, was never discharged. He and his descendants reckoned, indeed, that on the whole he was the poorer by the possession of this gem. A tradition remains that the bargain might have fallen through at the last moment but for the shrewdness of the Governor's second son, Lord Londonderry. When Rondet, the royal jeweller, came from Paris to receive it, he criticised the water of the stone. 'His lordship, who was quick enough in business, understood him, and putting a bank-note into his hands, bid him go to the window to see it in a better light. It was then decided to be in all respects perfect.'[1]

It is evident, however, that he was possessed of considerable though exaggerated wealth, and he was probably the first of those nabobs who were to bulk so largely in the drama, the society, and the politics of the eighteenth century. Among these his diamond gave him pre-eminence, and made his name both famous and proverbial. In England he remained for the rest of his life, some sixteen years, dying in 1726. The reformed filibuster had become a power in the land. He had wealth, force of character, political connection, and parliamentary influence. This last must have been an object with him, as we find him sitting for Thirsk instead of his own borough of Old Sarum ; and his eldest grandson seems to have inherited a considerable but indefinable interest in the borough-mongering of the West, having definite powers in regard to Okehampton and Sarum, and vaguer connections elsewhere. So the Governor, a staunch Whig and furious anti-Jacobite, with an influential son-in-law in Stanhope, a soldier and statesman who was First Minister for a time, was a man to be reckoned with. He was indeed offered, and had accepted, the Governorship of Jamaica, a high compliment, for it was then a position of peculiar difficulty, but never took up the appointment; finding probably his hands full at home, with an insubordinate family to manage, capital to invest, and estates to superintend.

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[1] Camelford.

We find him living at Twickenham, Swallowfield, Blandford, and in Pall Mall, but mainly at Stratford, near Old Sarum. He had indeed contemplated building his principal residence at Blandford, his early home. But the younger children, finding that this would be settled on the eldest son, intercepted his purpose and turned his attention to Swallowfield, 'where, however, he contrived to throw away as much money in a very ugly place with no property about it,'[1] writes his resentful heir.

Finally, in 1726, the Governor was gathered to his fathers, and his spoils caused some disappointment. His wealth had been over-rated, as is perhaps the case with all notorious fortunes, and not well invested; at any rate, he had burned his fingers in the South Sea Bubble. He seems to have left 100,000*l.* in personal property, though some of that may have consisted in unsubstantial and unrealised advances to Lord Londonderry, or others of his children.

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[1] Camelford.

He had bought land wherever he could find it (for the sake, perhaps, of influence as much as income), in London (Soho), Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, as well as that most marketable of assets, Old Sarum, and apparently other borough interests. But his greatest acquisition was the noble estate of Boconnoc, which he purchased in 1717 from the widow of that wild Mohun who was slain in duel by his brother-in-law, the Duke of Hamilton. The Governor paid 53,000*l.* for the estate, a great price in those days; but was held to have got a bargain.[1]

To his family he had always been formidable, but also an object of jealous rapacity and expectation. They wrangled and intrigued for his money both during his life and afterwards, and seem to have been universally dissatisfied by the result. 'From the various characters of these persons' (the Governor's children) 'it is easy to conceive,' writes Lord Camelford, 'in what manner the Governor must have been pulled to pieces by their different passions and interests when he came to realise his wealth in England.' The transactions with Lord Londonderry seem to have been particularly complicated; in fact they were never unravelled. We only gather, as a specimen of them, that after the Governor's death his executors claimed 95,000*l.* as due from Lord Londonderry; which Lord Londonderry denied, claiming 10,000*l.* from the estate. Thirty years were vainly spent in the endeavour to clear up this issue, a process rendered all the more arduous by Lord Londonderry's having peremptorily possessed himself of his father's papers after death. Only one case seems to have been free from complication.

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[1] Lyte's Dunster, 494.

The Governor stated succinctly that his son John was good for nothing, and so he logically left him nothing. John, however, claimed an annuity which, we may be confident, he never obtained. Thus there were endless disputes, a civil war in the family, not uncongenial, perhaps, to those who waged it; which died out only with the combatants, but which illustrates once more the volcanic character of these truculent Pitts.

It is in his family relations, in his dealings with these ungracious heirs and with his own wife, that the Governor is most vivid and interesting; at any rate, to one who has to trace the heredity of genius and character in his descendants. Thomas Pitt's blood came all aflame from the East, and flowed like burning lava to his remotest descendants, with the exception of Chatham's children; but even then it blazed up again in Hester Stanhope. There was in it, even when it throbbed in the veins of his eldest son and grandson, some tropical, irritant quality which, under happy circumstances and control, might produce genius, but which under ordinary circumstances could only evolve domestic skirmish and friction. The Governor himself, in his dealings with his wife and children, does not seem to have been tolerant or tolerable. He set himself to rule them with the notions of absolutism which are associated with the Oriental monarchies, but he met with no great measure of success. It is necessary to study his methods as exhibiting the volcanic source of a formidable race.

His wife was of the family of Innes in Morayshire, 'of Scotch and Cornish extraction,' says Lord Camelford, and she was lineally descended from the Regent Murray. Sir John Sinclair. like a loyal Scot, attributes the genius and eloquence of the Pitts to their 'fortunate connection . . . . with a Miss Innes of Redhall, in the Highlands of Scotland.' Of her, nevertheless, in unconsciousness of this obligation, but in receipt of private advices, the Governor writes in terms of implacable hostility. He had heard, he says to his son, 'that your mother has been guilty of some imprudence at the Bath . . . . let it be what it will, in my esteem she is noe longer my wife, nor will I see her more if I can help it.'[1]

But his children were not to be released from duty to her by her supposed misconduct. Four years earlier he had written to Robert: 'If what you write of your mother be true, I think she is mad, and wish she was well secured in Bedlam; but I charge you let nothing she says or does make you undutiful in any respect whatever.' So when they apparently act on the Governor's view of Mrs. Pitt, he turns round and belabours them. 'Have all of you,' he inquires of his eldest son, 'shook hands with shame, that you regard not any of the tyes of Christianity, humanity, consanguinity, duty, good morality, or anything that makes you differ from beasts, but must run from one end of the kingdome to the other, aspersing one another, and aiming at the ruine and destruction of one another?' This genial picture of his offspring does not seem wholly imaginary, for the Governor proceeds: 'That you should dare to doe such an unnatural and opprobrious action as to turne your mother and sisters out of doors?—for which I observe your frivolous reasons, and was astonished to read them; and I no less resint what they did to your child at Stratford. But I see your hand is against every one of them, and every one against you, and your brother William to his last dying minute.' (William had died young, in 1706.) A week later he writes again: 'Not only your letters, but all I have from friends, are stuffed with an account of the hellish confusion that is in my family; and by what I can collect of all my letters, the vileness of your actions on all sides are not to be paralleled in history. Did ever mother, brother, and sisters study one another's ruine and destruction more than my unfortunate and cursed family have done?' He again reverts to the grievance of Robert's having turned his mother and sisters out of doors, though he calls them, in the same letter, 'an infamous wife and children,' and states that he has 'discarded and renounced your mother for ever;' apparently on suspicion, for he makes 'noe distinction between women that are reputed ill and such as are actually soe.' The wife of the Cæsar of Fort St. George had to be above suspicion. Nor is this by any means an isolated passage. From his Eastern satrapy the Governor pours on his hapless family, and especially on his firstborn, a constant flood of scorn and invective. The arrival of the Indian mail must have caused a periodical panic to his children, and his announcement in 1715 that 'writing now is not so much my talent as formerly' a corresponding relief.

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[1] This and the following extracts from the Governor's correspondence are all taken from the Dropmore Papers (Hist. MSS.).

In vain does Robert, the eldest son, inspire friends to write to the Governor glowing accounts of his conduct; the Governor sniffs suspicion in every breeze. 'I wish gaming bee not rife in your family, or you could never have spent so considerable an estate in so short a time.' 'I wish gameing, drinking, and other debaucheries has not been the bane of you.' 'I wish these sore eyes of yours did not come by drinking, and that generally ushers in gaming, of either of which vices or any other dishonourable action, if I find you guilty, you may be assured I will give you no quarter.' 'I think that no son in the world deserves more to be discarded by a father.' But on the rare occasions when the Governor does not write in a passion his letters are full of sound sense. The cost of education is the only expense which he does not grudge. 'I would also have you putt your mother in mind that she gives her daughters good education, and not to stick at any charge for it.' But he wishes to get his money's worth. 'See that your brothers and sisters keep close to their studies, and let not my money be spent in vain on them; if it be, I'll pinch 'em hereafter.' Again, later, he writes: 'When this reaches you your brothers will be 17 years old. If their genius leads them to be scholars, I would have them sent to Oxford, but placed in two distinct colleges; and if inclined to study law you may enter them in the Temple. But if they are inclined to be merchants, let them learn all languages, and obtain perfect knowledge of the sciences bearing upon trade. I believe that trade will flourish rather than decay.'

When he returned home things were probably not much better for his children, though his letters, of course, are less frequent, and also less violent. But we gather from timid and vigilant bulletins sent off by those who cautiously approached the Governor's lair that he was still as formidable and plain spoken as ever. He suspects Robert of Jacobitism, the supreme sin in the judgment of the old Governor. 'It is said you are taken up with factious caballs, and are contriving amongst you to put a French kickshaw upon the throne again.' 'I have heard since I came to towne,' he writes seven years afterwards, 'that you are strooke with your old hellish acquaintance, and in all your discourse are speaking in favour of that villainous traytor Ormond.' And again: 'Since last post I have had it reiterated to me that in all company you are vindicating Ormonde and Bullingbrooke, the two vilest rebells that ever were in any nation, and that you still adhere to your cursed Tory principles, and keep those wretches company who hoped by this time to have murthered the whole Royall family: in which catastrophe your father was sure to fall,' &c. &c. From which it may be gathered that the moral temperature of Pall Mall, whence the Governor was writing, differed little from that of Madras.

The only note of tenderness that he ever strikes is with regard to his grandson, William, to whom he looks with a rare prescience of attention. At first he conducts both boys from Eton to Swallowfield, 'with some of their comrogues,' on a short leave of absence. But soon it is William alone whom he takes as a companion. 'I set out for Swallowfield Friday next; your son, William, goes with me.' 'I observe you have sent for your son, William, from Eton. He is a hopeful lad, and doubt not but he will answer yours and all his friends' expectations.' 'I shall be glad to see Will here as he goes to Eton.' 'Monday last I left Will at Eton.' Sentences like these taken from the Governor's letters are, when the writer is considered, a sufficient testimony of exceptional regard. It is not too much to say that William is the only one of his descendants whom the Governor commends; the only one, indeed, who never falls under the lash of the Governor's uncontrollable tongue.

The Governor left behind him three sons, Robert, Thomas, and John; and two daughters, Lucy and Essex. Robert, the eldest son, married, somewhat clandestinely, Harriot Villiers, sister of the Earl of Grandison, 'who seems to have brought with her,' says her grandson, 'little more than the insolence of a noble alliance.' A more favourable estimate declares that she had a fortune of 3000*l.*, and that 'it is a great dispute among those who have the pleasure of conversing with her whether her beauty, understanding, or good-humour be the most captivating.' She makes a pale apparition in Lady Suffolk's correspondence, soliciting a place for her brother, Lord Grandison, with the offer of a bribe, and subsiding under the royal confidant's rebuke.[1]

The second, Thomas, married one of the heiresses of Ridgeway, Earl of Londonderry. After that nobleman's death 'he *bought* the honours which were extinct in the person of his wife's father.'[2] One infers from casual hints that Thomas may have had the most influence with his father, and that he was not embarrassed by scruples. He was, says Lord Camelford, 'a man of no character, and of parts that were calculated only for the knavery of business, in which he overreached others, and at last himself.' But Camelford may have been soured by the controversies which followed the Governor's death. The honours so dubiously acquired died out with Lord Londonderry's two sons.

John, the Governor's third son, 'was in the army, an amiable vaurien, a personal favourite with the King, and, indeed, with all who knew him as a sort of Comte de Gramont, who contrived to sacrifice his health, his honour, his fortunes to a flow of libertinism which dashed the fairest prospect, and sank him for many years before his death in contempt and obscurity.'[1] This death took place, within Lord Camelford's memory, 'at the thatched house by the turnpike in Hammersmith.' John seems to have been a sort of Will Esmond, and we have on record a horse transaction of his which savours strongly of Thackeray's famous knave.[2] He married 'a sister of Lord Fauconberg's, whose personal talents and accomplishments distinguished her as much at least as her birth, and much more than her virtues.'[3]

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[1] Lady Suffolk's Letters, i. 101-4.

[2] Camelford (italics his).

Another of Colonel John's freaks is worth retailing, as throwing light on the peremptory methods of the Pitts, and of the manner in which the Governor was harried by his offspring. He waited outside his father's house in Pall Mall on a day when he knew that one of the estate agents was to bring up the rents of an estate. He watched the man in and out of the house, then went in, where he found some secretary counting the money over, swept it deftly with his sword into his hat, and escaped into the street, full of glee at having bubbled an unappreciative parent out of his dues, and leaving the unhappy subordinate paralysed behind him.[4] This anecdote enables us to understand why the Governor had so low an opinion of John, and why the keys were kept under the Governor's bed when this scapegrace was at home.[5]

Of the two daughters, Lucy, who married the first Earl

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[1] Camelford.

[2] Dropmore Papers, i. 70.

[3] Camelford.

[4] Ib.

[5] Dropmore Papers, i. 75.

Stanhope, the minister and general, seems to have left a fragrant memory behind her; we are pleased to find her resenting her sister-in-law's behaviour to her mother, the Governor's wife. She died in February 1723–4.

Essex, the second, married Charles Cholmondely, of Vale Royal, grandfather of the first Lord Delamere. 'Her peevishness made her the scourge of her family,' says her great-nephew, so we may conclude that she was not devoid of the Pitt characteristics. She died in 1754.

Over his luckless heir the Governor had kept constantly suspended the terrors of his testamentary dispositions. 'My resentments,' he wrote not long before his death, 'against you all have been justly and honourably grounded, and that you will find when my head is laid.' Nevertheless, when he died in 1726, Robert, the belaboured eldest son, succeeded to the great bulk of his fortune. He, in his turn, did not lose a moment in visiting on his eldest son, Thomas, the sufferings that he himself had endured. In the very letter in which he announces his father's death to the lad, he speaks of his son's 'past slighting and disobedient conduct towards me,' and lectures him with uncompromising severity. He does, indeed, announce an allowance of 700*l.* a year, but soon after docks it of 200*l.* on the flimsiest and shabbiest pretexts. Robert, who seems to have been a poor creature, as his portrait at Boconnoc represents him, mean and cantankerous, with some of the violence but without the vigour and ability of the Governor, only survived his father a year, into which he managed to concentrate a creditable average of quarrels with his family. His death was something like the sinking of a fireship; spluttering and scolding he disappears in 1727.

Robert's life and death were on the lines laid down by Pitt precedent. He lived and died on ill terms with his family, and his death was followed by the customary lawsuits. During his short possession of his patrimony he had laboured under some miscalculation as to its extent; for, after examining the rentals and estates, he had congratulated himself on the possession of 'full 10,000*l.* a year;' 'in which belief he died soon after, leaving the same delusion to his son, which was one of the principal causes of his misfortunes.'[1] As the estate was entailed, Thomas, Robert's eldest son, was not liable for the debts of his father, or anxious to assume that responsibility. The claims that gave him most trouble were those of his mother, Robert's widow, who had obtained additions to her jointure, and had had 10,000*l.* settled on her children at her marriage, a provision which was apparently never carried into execution. Many bills and cross bills in Chancery were the consequence of these claims, which ended in Mrs. Robert Pitt's retirement into France, where she shortly afterwards died. Her brother and champion, Lord Grandison, also retreated to Ireland, both thus renouncing administration of the effects of Robert Pitt. So, avows Lord Camelford, 'my father seized whatever fell into his hands without account, either belonging to my grandfather or grandmother, keeping at arm's length every demand upon him, till somehow or other these litigations seem to have worn themselves out and slept by the acquiescence of all parties.' The 'acquiescence,' we may add, seems only to have accrued by the death of the litigants.

Robert left two sons and five daughters, and this brood was not unworthy of the family traditions. The eldest son was Thomas, the second William, the subject of this book; to the daughters we shall come presently.

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[1] Camelford.

The volcanic element in the Pitt blood was fully manifest in this generation, and Thomas was a child of wrath. His relations with his younger brother William seem always to have been uneasy, and from an early period they seem to have been wholly uncongenial to each other.

Whatever William may have been, Thomas was impracticable, and no one seems to have succeeded in working amicably with him. He was a man of extremes. 'All his passions,' writes his son, 'were violent by nature, particularly pride and ambition, which were painted in his figure, one of the most imposing I ever saw. He was not without good qualities; but, to speak fairly, they were greatly overbalanced by the contrary tendencies.' He was said not to have been naturally vicious, but early embarrassments, perpetual family litigations, a sense of injury, the flattery of dependents, and a train of mortifications and disappointments 'had formed in him such habits of rapacity, injustice and violence that he seemed at last to have lost even the sense of right and wrong.' He had, evidently, personal attractions, marred by an imperious demeanour, was strong and graceful, addicted to hunting and manly sports, fond of music and dancing. His overbearing manner, which arose from an undisguised contempt of his equals, gave him some ascendancy in Cornwall, where, however, though endured, he was secretly detested.

So haughty and violent a character might, one supposes, have been mellowed and redeemed by a fortunate marriage, and Thomas seems to have secured an angel as his wife. At the opera one night he saw a daughter of Sir Thomas

Lyttelton, was struck by her extraordinary beauty, proposed in his headlong manner next day, and was accepted. Her son laments her want of any fortune to remedy her husband's eternal embarrassments, but she seems to have lacked nothing else. Besides her loveliness, 'as a faithful wife, a tender mother, a kind friend, an indulgent mistress, she was a pattern to her sex.'[1] But her very virtues turned her husband against her. Her meek gentleness, humility, and charity, the extreme piety, carried almost to bigotry, in which she had been reared, were reproachful contrasts to his opposite qualities. She was the object of ridicule to the wit and malice of others, possibly, we should guess, of her sisters-in-law; and, finally, every kind sentiment, even of common humanity, towards her, was extinguished in the husband who had loved her so passionately.

Thomas seems, from the moment of succession until death, to have been a prey to pecuniary embarrassment. He started with an exaggerated view of his resources, and launched into extravagance; arrogance and ambition made him more profuse; a taste for borough management, strong in him, was probably more expensive than any other possible form of gambling; so all his life was soured by the struggle between pride and debt, and by consequent mortification. This seems to be the secret of his wasted and unhappy existence.

United as he was by his marriage to the Lytteltons, Grenvilles, and Cobham, he naturally became an adherent and favourite of the Prince of Wales. He probably called the Prince's attention in glowing terms to the possibilities of the Heir Apparent's Duchy of Cornwall, and, at any

[1] Camelford.

rate, became His Royal Highness's parliamentary manager in the West, the realm of rotten boroughs. There the Prince was flattered, or flattered himself, with influence as Duke of Cornwall, in a region where Lord Falmouth, the famous threatener of 'we are seven,' and Thomas himself exercised a more substantial sway. He enjoyed a fleeting triumph at the General Election of 1741, not unaccompanied with the constant quarrels which were the vital element of his family. As a reward he was appointed in 1742 Warden of the Stannaries.

Then he seems to decay. The General Election of 1747, on which he had built high hopes, brought him nothing but debt and disaster. He writes in despair to the Prince, and Frederick sends kindly and reassuring messages in reply; but he was now ruined, and his last prospects vanished with the Prince of Wales, on whose death he was superseded in the Stannaries; this perhaps marks the date of his final catastrophe. At any rate, there was a financial collapse, and he had to go abroad. Shelburne met him at Utrecht and heard him hold forth in the true Pitt style, abusing his brother William as a hypocrite and scoundrel, with a great flow of language and a quantity of illustrative anecdotes. 'A bad man,' says Horace Walpole. 'Never was ill-nature so dull as his, never dullness so vain.'

Shelburne hints that he was mad, or nearly mad, and that, though not actually confined, he was obliged to live a very retired life, complicated by straitened circumstances. 'The unhappy man,' as William calls him, had never been on cordial terms with his brother: they had had the usual family wrangles about property, and recently, in his distress, Thomas had solicited from William, now Secretary of State and supreme, the appointment of Minister to the Swiss Cantons. He might have foreseen refusal, for he was fit for no such employment, and William was sensitive as to charges of favour to his family from the Crown. But men are friendly judges of their own fitness for any post which they may happen to desire, and Thomas did not care, probably, to have his merits or demerits so justly appraised by his junior; so he spent his time of exile in denouncing to any audience that was attracted by his name, the ingratitude and neglect of his successful relative. He died in July 1761, and William frigidly announces to his nephew the death of 'the unhappy man' from apoplexy.

This nephew was created Lord Camelford under the auspices of his first cousin, the younger Pitt, whom, by the way, Pitt-like, he seems unable to forgive for this favour, as he never mentions his creator. The malicious bards of the Rolliad hinted that the peerage accrued from some borough-mongering transaction:

'Say, what gave Camelford his wished for rank?
Did he devote old Sarum to the Bank?
Or did he not, that envied rank to gain,
Transfer the victim to the Treasury's fame?' (*sic*)

But, though he was by no means destitute of the family characteristics, this Thomas was a man of high honour, character and charm. He won the heart of Horace Walpole, whose neighbour he was, until they quarrelled, as of course they were sure to do. But for a time Horace, whose affection was not often or easily given and whose confidence in matters of taste was fastidious, gave both affection and confidence unstintedly to this young man. He attracted, too, the still rarer tenderness of his uncle William. To him Chatham addressed the well-known letters on education which he found time to write in all the business of office; though Thomas on attaining manhood repaid him with the most cordial aversion. This sentiment, which seems at first to savour of ingratitude, is not in reality difficult to explain. In the first place, the uncle was to some extent involved in those financial questions connected with the paternal inheritance in which the father played, as we have seen, so intrepid though unscrupulous a part. Mutual aversion facilitated mutual disagreement in matters always fertile of friction; and the younger Thomas, though he had an ill opinion of his father, sided with him as against his uncle. We cannot, even on Thomas's own showing, blame the uncle in these rather petty transactions, and William's besetting sin was certainly not avarice; but neither can we blame the son for siding with the father. On an impartial survey we may conclude that disputes between two Pitts who were near descendants of the Governor were incapable of an amicable solution.

But there was more than this. William, for some purpose of persuasion, says Lord Camelford, informed Thomas that his nephew, the younger Thomas (Lord Camelford himself), would be his heir. This was a considerable, almost a magnificent, prospect. William was then middle-aged and unmarried, his position and future were alike splendid, and high office might in those days lead to wealth. His career had, moreover, brought him a legacy of 10,000*l.* from

Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. But, far beyond that there was the reversion of the great Althorp inheritance, between which and William there were only the lives of the short-lived possessor and his sickly child. That William held out this expectation we think so probable that we do not even question it. He had all his life been half an invalid, and never seems to have contemplated marriage till he did marry, at the age of forty-eight. He, moreover, loved his nephew with sincere and proved tenderness. Why, then, should it be doubted that he indicated him as his heir, when, in truth, he had no other? But that he did this with an unworthy motive or for the purpose of deception there is neither proof nor probability. The episode probably furnished matter for his brother's maudlin ravings at Utrecht, but we do not think that it materially influenced the opinions of his nephew.

The true reason for Camelford's hatred of his uncle was that he fell under the influence of George Grenville at a time when Grenville had broken for ever with Pitt. The estimable qualities of Grenville have been described with a colour and exuberance which could only proceed from the glowing imagination of Burke. But, with all allowance for what Burke saw in this able, narrow, and laborious person, it cannot be denied that the foundation of his qualities was a stubborn self-esteem which necessarily led to stubborn hatreds. Grenville came to hate Bute, to hate the King, to hate the Duke of Cumberland; but it may be doubted if all his other accumulated hatreds equalled that which he felt for his brother-in-law. Pitt, while in office, had kept Grenville in a subordinate position, and had apparently thought it adequate to his deserts. When Grenville was Minister, Pitt had negotiated with the King to overthrow him. In the schism produced by Pitt's resignation, Temple had sided with Pitt and quarrelled with his brother George. But, worst of all, Pitt had held Grenville up, not unsuccessfully, to public ridicule and contempt. Now, a Grenville to himself was not as other men are; he was something sacred and ineffable. Neither Temple nor George ever doubted that they were the equals, nay, the superiors, of their brother-in-law, whom in their hearts they regarded as only a brilliant adventurer, useful, under careful guidance, to the Grenville scheme of creation. When, therefore, Pitt quizzed and thwarted George, he raised an implacable enemy. Later on, they might affect reconciliation, and Temple might pompously announce to the world that the Brethren were reunited. But George's undying resentment against Pitt never flagged to the hour of his death.

Thomas Pitt came under Grenville's influence at the fiercest moment of this rancour, and seems to have been the only person on record who was fascinated by him. Thomas writes of him with affectionate enthusiasm long after his death, and in his life waged his wars with zeal. One of these led to a quarrel with Horace Walpole, arising out of the dismissal of Conway, which produced a lengthy correspondence, still extant. But to become the disciple of George Grenville it was necessary to abhor William Pitt. Thomas took the test without difficulty, and adhered to it conscientiously. His father's influence, such as it was, tended in the same direction. So, though Thomas specifically places his uncle at the head of all British statesmen, and although he besought Chatham to sit to Reynolds for the gallery at Boconnoc, and though he displayed grief, real or ostentatious, at Chatham's death, going the quaint length of asking every one to dinner who spoke sympathetically in either House on the occasion; in spite of all this, he retails aversion in every sentence that he writes; aversion of which the obvious source is devotion to Grenville. It is necessary to explain this because Camelford's manuscript notes would otherwise be inexplicable. Putting this violent prejudice on one side, this memorial drawn up by Camelford for his son, though too intimate for complete publication, is a priceless document. Let all be forgiven him for the sake of this manuscript. It may be inaccurate, and biassed and acrid, but it presents the family circle from within by one of themselves, and no more vivid picture can exist of that strange cockatrice brood of Pitts.

The son for whom it was written grew up a spitfire, not less eccentric than his sires, and became notorious as the second Lord Camelford. His was a turbulent, rakehelly, demented existence, the theme of many newspaper paragraphs. He revived in his person all the pranks and outrage of the Mohawks. Bull-terriers, bludgeons, fighting of all kinds were associated with him; riots of all kinds were as the breath of his nostrils, more especially theatrical tumults. One of these latter contests brought him into contact with the pacific authors of the 'Rejected Addresses,' who were admitted, not without trepidation, to his apartment, which was almost an arsenal. It can scarcely be doubted that the lurking madness of the Pitts found a full expression in him. As an officer in the Navy, commanding a sloop in the West Indies, his conduct fell little if at all short of insanity. It is not easy to understand how even in those more facile times he escaped disgrace.

Eventually, at the age of twenty-nine he was killed in a wanton duel with a Mr. Best. The circumstances of this mortal combat show that he was a true Pitt of the Governor's headstrong breed. Both before the duel and afterwards, on his death-bed, he acknowledged that he was the sole wanton aggressor, and that his antagonist was blameless. But as Mr. Best was reported the best pistol-shot in England, his pride would not allow him to lend himself, however indirectly, to any sort of accommodation. So he died, and with him died the eldest line of the Governor's branch of Pitts. Boconnoc passed to his sister, Lady Grenville, wife of the minister who was Chatham's nephew. The relations of the brothers-in-law seem to have been on the Pitt model. 'Pique against Lord Grenville explains his (Lord Camelford's) conduct,' writes Lady Holland.[1] Despite all their idiosyncrasies it seemed impossible to keep the Pitts and Grenvilles from quarrelling and blending.

All this may seem trivial enough, but it has an important, indeed necessary, bearing on the story of William's life, as showing the stock from which he sprang.

The harsh passions of the Governor and the petulant violence of his heirs seem so outrageous and uncontrolled as to verge on actual insanity. Shelburne explicitly states that 'there was a great deal of madness in the family.' Every indication confirms this statement. What seemed in the Governor brutality and excess, frequently developed in his descendants into something little if at all short of mental disorder. We thus trace to their source the germs of that haughty, impossible, anomalous character, distempered at times beyond the confines of reason, which made William so difficult to calculate or comprehend.

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[1] Journal, ii. 45.

CHAPTER II.

AND now we come by a process of exhaustion to the subject of this book.

William Pitt, the elder statesman of that name, was born in London, in the parish of St. James's, November 15, 1708. It does not now seem possible to trace the house of his nativity, but it was probably in Pall Mall, where his father then or afterwards resided. We are limited to the information that his godfathers were 'Cousin Pitt' (probably George Pitt of Strathfieldsaye) and General Stewart, after the latter of whom he was named. General Stewart was the second husband of William's grandmother, Lady Grandison.[1]

It may be well to recall here that William was the second son of Robert Pitt, the Governor's eldest son, and his wife, Harriot Villiers, fourth daughter of Catherine, Viscountess Grandison, and her husband the Hon. Edward Villiers Fitzgerald, who was descended from a brother of the first Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

Of his childhood we catch but occasional and remote glimpses.

His grandfather, as we have seen, had early marked him. The shrewd old nabob had discerned the boy's possibilities, but seems also to have determined that his energies should not be relaxed by wealth. At any rate, the Governor refrained from any special sign of favour, and bequeathed the lad only an annuity of 100*l.* a year. This was William's sole patrimony, for he seems to have received nothing from his father.

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[1] Dropmore Papers, i. 38, 41.

He was sent to Eton, or, as William always spells it, 'Eaton,' at an early age; the exact period does not seem to be ascertainable. Here he had notable contemporaries: Henry Fox, George Lyttelton, Charles Pratt, Hanbury Williams, and Fielding.

'Thee,' said this last, addressing Learning, 'in the favourite fields, where the limpid gently rolling Thames washes thy Etonian banks, in early youth I have worshipped. To thee, at thy birchen altar, with true Spartan devotion I have sacrificed my blood.'[1] Pitt could have echoed his schoolfellow's apostrophe if the not improbable legend be true that he underwent an unusually severe flogging for having been caught out of bounds. But even without this, his experiences were no doubt poignant enough; for, though the son of a wealthy father, he was placed on the foundation, and the Eton of those days afforded to its King's Scholars no lap of luxury. The horrors and hardships of Long Chamber, the immense dormitory of these lads, have come down to us in a whisper of awful tradition, and it is therefore no matter for surprise, though it is for regret, that William did not share the passionate devotion of most Etonians for their illustrious college. He is credited indeed with saying that he had scarcely ever observed a boy who was not cowed for life at Eton[2]: a sweeping condemnation which sounds strange in these days, but which is easily explained by the misery that he, as a sickly boy, may well have undergone in that petty Lacedæmon. For his health deprived him of all the pleasures of his age, as he was already a martyr to gout. That hereditary malady which cut him off from the sports of the school impelled him to study, and so served his career. Mr. Thackeray, who wrote his biography in quarto and who may be discriminated without difficulty from the genius of that name, deposes vaguely that 'Dr. Bland, at that time the headmaster of Eton, is said to have highly valued the attainments of his pupil.' We rest more securely on a letter of his Eton tutor, Mr. Burchett, of which the last sentence need only be quoted here, as it is all that relates to William.

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[1] Tom Jones, Book xiii. Chapter i.

[2] Life of Shelburne, i. 72.

Mr. Burchett to Mr. Pitt.

Y^{r} younger Son has made a great Progress since his coming hither, indeed I never was concern'd with a young Gentleman of so good Abilities, & at the same time of so good a disposition, and there is no question to be made but he will answer all y^{r} Hopes.

I am, S^{r},
Y^{r} most Obedient & most Humble Servant,
Will: Burchett.[1]

This reference under the hand of an Eton tutor is exuberant enough. But no doubt rests on Pitt's school reputation. It survived even to the time of Shelburne, who speaks of him as distinguished at Eton. Lyttelton wrote of him while still there: 'This (good-humour) to Pitt's genius adds a brighter grace;'[2] a remarkable tribute from one Eton boy to another. More striking still is the tradition preserved by an unfriendly witness, William's nephew, Camelford. 'The surprising Genius of Lord Chatham,' he writes, 'distinguished him as early as at Eaton School, where he and his friend Lord Lyttelton in different ways were looked up to as prodigies.' School prodigies rarely mellow into remarkable men; though remarkable men are often credited, when their reputation is secure, with having been school prodigies. But the contemporary letter of Burchett and the reluctant testimony of Camelford admit of no doubts. Most significant, perhaps, of all is the preservation of the flotsam of school life, a couple of school bills, the tutor's letter, another from the boy himself. This last, which took eleven days in transmission, is here given. The bills have been already published by Sir Henry Lyte in his History of Eton.

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[1] Addressed: To Robert Pitt, Esq^{r}, at Stratford, near Old Sarum, Wilts. Endorsed: 'Mr. Burchet's letter about my Sons att Eton. Feb^{ry} 4th, 1722.'

[2] Lyttelton's Misc. Works, p. 650. 'Written at Eaton School, 1729.' The date is obviously wrong, for Pitt and Lyttelton both went to Oxford in 1726.

WILLIAM PITT TO HIS FATHER.

Eaton, Septembʳ yᵉ 29ᵗʰ.

Honᵉᵈ Sʳ,—I write this to pay my duty to you, and to lett you know that I am well, I hope you and my mama have found a great benefit from the Bath, and it would be a very great satisfaction to me, to hear how you do, I was in hopes of an answer to my last letter, to have heard how you both did, and I should direct my letters, to you; for not knowing how to direct my letters, has hindered me writing to you. my time has been pretty much taken up for this three weeks, in my trying for to gett into the fiveth form, And I am now removed into it; pray my duty to my mama and service to my uncle and aunt Stuart if now att the Bath. I am with great respect, Honᵉᵈ Sʳ, Your most dutiful Son,

W. PITT.[1]

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[1] Endorsed: 'from my Son William Sept. 29ᵗʰ: recᵈ Oct. 10ᵗʰ, 1723.'

This is the whole record extant of William's Eton life; to so many lads the happiest period of their existence, but not to him. An invalid, and so disabled for games, a recluse, perhaps a victim, he had no pleasant memories of Eton. But there, in all probability, he laid the foundations of character and intellect on which his fame was to be reared. It is not usually profitable to imagine pictures of the past, but it may not be amiss to evoke, in passing, the shadow of the lean, saturnine boy as he limped by the Thames, shaping a career, or pondering on life and destiny, dreaming of greatness where so many have dreamed, while he watched, half enviously, half scornfully, the sports in which he might not join. He is not the first, and will not be the last, to find his school a salutary school of adversity. He looked back to it with no gratitude. But Eton claims him for her own; and long generations of reluctant students have whiled away the reputed hours of learning or examination by gazing at his bust in Upper School, and dreamily conjecturing why so great a glamour still hangs about his name.

With these few remnants and this vague surmise ends all that is, or will probably ever be, known of William's childhood. Little enough if we compare it to the copious details furnished by modern autobiographers. But self-revelation was not the fashion of the eighteenth century, and childhood then furnished less to record. Boys were in the background, repressing their emotions, and inured to a rugged discipline which, though odious to the sympathetic delicacy of modern civilisation, produced the men who made the Empire.

From Eton, Pitt proceeded to Oxford, where he was admitted a Gentleman Commoner at Trinity College on

January 10th, 1726 (o.s.), guided thither, probably, by the fact that his uncle, Lord Stanhope, had been a member of that society. There are indications that at this time he was destined, like a great minister of a recent day, for the Church, but the gout attacked him with such violence as to compel him to leave the University without taking his degree. We have, however, an indirect proof of the reputation which he brought to Oxford in a letter from a Mr. Stockwell, who, although he had determined to give up tuition, consents to take William as his pupil, partly as a 'Salsbury man,' and so owing respect to the Pitt family; partly because of 'the character I hear of Mr. Pitt on all hands.'

William's only public achievement at Oxford was a copy of Latin verses which he published on the death of George I. They are artificial and uncandid, as is the nature of such compositions, and have been justly ridiculed by Lord Macaulay. But the performance is at least an early mark of ambition. If this be all, and it is all, that we know of this period of William's life, it seems worth while to print the two letters written by Mr. Stockwell to Robert Pitt, the more as they throw some light on bygone Oxford, a topic of evergreen interest.

MR. I. STOCKWELL TO ROBERT PITT.

Hon^ed^ S^r^,—I had long since determin'd, not to engage any more in a Trust of so much consequence, as the Care of a young Gentleman of Fortune is, & have in fact refus'd many offers of that sort: but the great Regard, that every Salsbury-Man must have for your Family, and the Character I hear of M^r^ Pitt from All Hands, put it out of my Power to decline a Proposal of so much Credit & Advantage to Myself & the College. I heartily wish your Business and Health would have allow'd you to have seen him settled here, because I flatter Myself, that you would have left Him in Our Society with some Degree of Satisfaction; as That can't be hop'd for, You will assure Yourself that everything shall be done with the exactest Care and Fidelity.

I have secur'd a very good Room for M^r Pitt, which is just now left by a Gentleman of Great Fortune, who is gone to the Temple. Tis thoroughly furnish't & with All necessarys, but perhaps may require some little Additional Expence for Ornament or Change of Furniture. The method of paying for the Goods of any Room in the University is, that Every Person leaving the College receives of his Successor Two Thirds of what He has expended. On this foot the Mony to be paid by M^r Pitt to the Gentleman who possess't the Room last, is 43^l, Two thirds of which, as likewise of whatever Addition He shall please to make to the Furniture, He is to receive again of the Person, who succeeds Him.

Tis usual for Young Gentlemen of Figure to have a small quantity of Table-Linnen, & sometimes some particular peices of plate, for the reception of Any Friend in their Rooms, but everything of that sort for Common & Publick Uses is provided by the College.

If you please to send me the Servitor's Name, I will immediately procure His admission into the College, & show Him all the Kindness in my Power, but as to His attendance on M^r Pitt it is not now usual in the University, nor, as I apprehend, can be of any Service. Tis much more Customary & Creditable to a Gentleman of Family to be attended by a Footman—But this I barely mention.

The other Expences of M^r Pitt's Admission will be in the following Articles:

Caution Mony (to be return'd again) .	10	0	0
Benefaction to the College . . .	10	0	0
For Admission to the Fellow's Common Room	2	0	0
Fee for the Use of the College Plate, &c.	2	0	0
College Serv^{ts} Fees	1	15	0
University Fees	0	16	0

I have stated Mr Pitt's Benefaction at Ten Pounds, because that is what we require & receive of every Gentleman-Commoner, & of very many Commoners; but I know Sr that you will excuse me for mentioning, that several Young Gentlemen of Mr Pitt's Gown have besides made the College a Present of a Peice of Plate of 10, or 12l. I am thus particular only in Obedience to Your Orders. I believe Sr if You please to remit a Bill of An Hundred Pounds, it will answer the whole expence of Mr. Pitt's settlement here and I shall have the Honour to send you a particular Account of the disposal of it. As I am debarr'd the Pleasure of waiting on You by a little Office, that Confines me to the College in Termtime, I shall take it a very great Favour, if you please to let me know at what time I may hope to see Mr Pitt here.

I beg my Humble Duty to Your Good Lady, & my Humble Service & Respects to Mr Pitt, and am with the highest Respect

Sr Yr most Oblig'd & Obedient Servt

Ios. Stockwell.[1]

Mr. Stockwell to Robert Pitt, 'at Swallowfield near Reading, Berks.'

Trin: Coll: Oxon: Decr 22. 1726.

Honrd Sr,—Upon receiving the favour of Yours & finding that it was your Intention that Mr Pitt should keep a Servant, I have made choice of Another Room much more Convenient for that Purpose, as it supply's a Lodging for His Footman. I have employ'd some Workmen in it to make some necessary alterations; but the whole expence will not amount to the Charge of the Chamber, I had mention'd to you before. As I am not willing, Mr Pitt should be put to the distress of lying One Night in an Inn, I will take Care, it shall be fit for his Reception by New Years Day, & I am sure He will like it very well.

I proposed so large a Sum, because I had not mention'd the Articles of Gown, Cap Bands, Tea-Furniture, & some other little Ornaments & Conveniences that young Gentlemen don't care to be without. You will be pleas'd to mention, in what degree of mourning[1] His Gown must be made; & I will send you an exact Account of the whole expence. There is no need of remitting any Mony, till He comes.

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[1] Endorsed: 'from Mr. Stockwell about ye charges of my Sons going to Oxon: Novr 1726 ansd Decr 1st.'

If You are willing to recommend the Servitor You spoke of, who may live here at a very easy rate (I believe very well for 15^{l} p. Ann) I have bespoke a place for him, & He may be admitted when you please. I beg My Humble Duty to Your Good Lady, & my Humble Service & Respects to Your Good Family, & am

S^{r} Y^{r} most Obliged & Obedient Serv^{t}
IOS. STOCKWELL.[2]

Fortunately, too, a few of William's Oxford letters have also been preserved. The first apologetically continues Stockwell's tale of preliminary expenses, and endeavours to deprecate Robert Pitt's economical wrath.

WILLIAM PITT TO HIS FATHER, IN PALL MALL.

Trin: Coll: Jan^{ry} Y^{e} 20th 1726/7.

Hon^{ed} S^{r}—After such delay, though not owing to any negligence on my Part, I am ashamed to send you y^{e} following accompt, without first making great apologies for not executing y^{e} Commands sooner.

Matriculation Fees	0	16	6
Caution money	10	0	0
Benefaction	10	0	0
Utensils of y^{e} Coll	2	0	0
Common Room	2	0	0
Coll: Serv^{ts} Fees	1	15	0
Paddesway[3] Gown	8	5	0

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[1] Mourning for the Governor.

[2] Endorsed: 'from M^{r} Stockwell about my Son W^{m} from Oxon: Dec^{r} 22^{d} ans^{d} 29th 1726.'

[3] Paduasoy.

Cap	0	7	0
Tea Table, China ware, bands &c.	6	5	0
Glasses	0	11	0
Thirds of Chamber & Furniture	41	7	8
Teaspoons	1	7	6
Summe total	84	14	8
Balance pd me by Mr Stockwell	15	05	4

I have too much reason to fear you may think some of these articles too extravagant, as they really are, but all I have to say for it is humbly to beg you would not attribute it to my extravagance, but to ye custom of this Place; where we pay for most things too at a high rate.

I must again repeat my wishes for yr health, hoping you have not been prevented by so painfull a delay as ye gout from pursuing yr intended journey to Town I must beg leave to subjoin my Duty to my Mother & love to my Sistrs and am with all Possible respect Sr Yr most dutyfull Son

Wm. Pitt.[1]

The next is written after an evident explosion of that wrath. In the Pitt family, even more than in others, father and son viewed filial expenditure from opposite points of view. It is painful, then, but not surprising to find that Robert should have regarded William's washing bill as beyond the dreams of luxury.

William Pitt to his Father, 'in Pall Mall.'

Trin: Coll: April ye 29th.

Honed Sr,—I recd yrs of ye 25th in which I find with ye utmost concern ye dissatisfaction you express at my expences. To pretend to justify, or defend myself in this case would be, I fear, with reason thought impertinent; tis sufficient to convince me of the extravagance of my expences, that they have met with y^{r} disapprobation, but might I have leave to instance an Article or two, perhaps you may not think 'em so wild and boundless, as with all imaginable uneasiness, I see you do at present. Washing 2*l.* 1*s.* 0*d.*, about 3*s.* 6*d.* per w^{k}, of which money half a dozen shirts at 4*d.* each comes to 2*s.* per w^{k}, shoes and stockings 19*s.* 0*d.* Three pairs of Shoes at 5*s.* each, two pair of Stockings, one silk, one worcestead, are all that make up this Article, but be it as it will, since, S^{r}, you judge my expence too great, I must endeavour for y^{e} future to lessen it, & shall be contented with whatever you please to allow me. one considerable article is a servant, an expence which many are not at, and which I shall be glad to spare, if you think it fitt, in hopes to convince you I desire nothing superfluous; as I have reason to think you will not deny me what is necessary. As you have been pleased to give me leave I shall draw upon you for 25^{li} as soon as I have occasion. I beg my duty to my Mother & am with all possible respect

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[1] Endorsed: 'from my Son Willm Oxon Jany 20th wth ye acct ye 100 answd ye 24th 1726/7.'

Hon^{ed} S^{r}, y^{r} most Dutifull Son
W. Pitt.

The third is mysterious enough to us, but it expresses gratitude for some marks of kindness, whether to the writer or not, cannot now be known. It is difficult to imagine that Robert should have extended his beneficence to any one at Trinity but William, and yet it is not easy to depict the gratitude of a College for a favour done to one of their undergraduates by his father. In any case there remains no longer any trace of such benefaction at Trinity. The inevitable financial statement in which the bookseller's bill figures handsomely, not far behind the tailor's, is tactfully kept separate in a postscript. It is, however, well to know that this letter, the last in all probability that William wrote to his father, who died six weeks afterwards, is one of as much affection as the fashion of that day permitted.

William Pitt to his Father.

Trin: Coll: April y^{e} 10th 1727.

Hon^{ed} S^{r},—I hope you gott well to London yesterday as I did to this place, though too late to trouble you with a letter that Evening. I can not say how full of acknowledgements every one amongst us is for y^{e} fav^{r} you confer'd upon one of their society. One could almost imagine by y^{e} good wishes I hear express't toward you from all hands, you were rather a publick benefactor to y^{e} College, than a Patron to any one member of it. I mention this because I believe it will not be unacceptable to you to hear y^{r} fav^{rs} are gratefully rec^{d}. I hope my Mother is well, to whom I beg my Duty: & am with all possible respect, S^{r},

Y^{r} most dutifull son,
Wm. Pitt.

S^{r},—Finding y^{e} quarter just up I send you y^{e} following accompt commencing Jan^{ry} y^{e} 9th to y^{e} 9th of this month.

Battels	15	0	0
Paid Lambert b^{d} Wages	4	4	0
Three months learning french & entrance .	2	2	0
For a course of experimental Philosophy .	2	2	0
For coat & breeches & making . . .	5	18	0
Booksellers bill	5	0	0
Cambrick for ruffles	1	4	0
Shoes, stockings	1	19	0
Candles, coal, fagots	3	10	0
Pockett money, Gloves, Powder, Tea, &c.	4	4	0
For washing	2	2	0
	47	5	0
Remains	9	15	0[1]

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[1] Endorsed: 'from my Son Will^{m} Aprill 10th wth an acc^{t}

of 3 mo^{s} expences	47	05	0
Rem^{s} in his hand	9	15	0
In all	57	0	0

Answ^{d} Aprill 25th, wth leave to draw for 25^{l}.'

Robert Pitt died in Paris, May 20, 1727, and the next letter is addressed to his widow at Bath. The eldest son, Thomas, already, it would appear, had played William false, and caused a coolness with the mother by not delivering a letter.

William Pitt to his Mother.

Oxford July y^e^ 10^th^ 1727.

Hon^ed^ Mad^m^,—Tis with no small impatience I have waited for y^e^ pleasure of hearing from you, but as that is denied me, I take this opportunity of repeating my Duty and enquiries after y^r^ health. I wrote to you by return of y^e^ coach, enclos'd to my Brother, to be forwarded by him, from whom I have also received no answer, which makes me imagine you may not have less reason to be angry with me for not paying my Duty to you, than I have to be sorry at not having y^e^ pleasure to hear from you, I mean my letter has not come into y^r^ hands. I send this by y^e^ Post from hence, which I hope will find better luck, it will be a sensible pleasure to me to hear y^e^ waters agree with you: for w^ch^ reason out of kindness to me, as also in regard to y^r^ own quiet (lest I should trouble you every other post with an importuning epistle) be so good as to give y^e^ satisfaction of hearing you are well; I am with all respect,

Y^r^ most Dutifull Son,
Wm. Pitt.

The following letter would seem to indicate that William was spending the Long Vacation at Oxford, while his mother as usual was spending hers at Bath. He appears to hint disapproval of an acquaintance she wished him to make, reversing the usual position of parent and son on such matters. There is again reproachful allusion to his brother; there are few indeed in any other tone throughout William's correspondence.

WILLIAM PITT TO HIS MOTHER, 'AT BATH.'

Oxon Sept^{r} y^{e} 17th 1727.

Hon^{ed} Mad^{m},—I rec'd y^{e} favour of y^{rs} by M^{r} Mayo and have waited on M^{r} Vesey as you order'd, with whom, had you not recommended him to me upon y^{e} knowledge you have of his family, I should not have sought an acquaintance. I hope you will lett me hear soon y^{r} intentions. If I am not to be happy in seeing you hear, y^{e} certainty of it can not be more uneasy than the apprehension; if I am, I shall gain so much happiness, by y^{e} foreknowledge of it. What part of y^{e} world my Brother is in or when he will be in Town, I know not. I hope to hear from him between this and y^{e} Coronation. The only consideration y^{t} can make me give up quietly y^{e} pleasure I promis'd myself in seeing you here, is y^{t} you are employ'd in a more important care to y^{r}self and Family, y^{e} preservation of y^{r} health. I have only to add my Love to my Sist^{er} and am with all respect,

Y^{r} most dutifull son
WM. PITT.

The gout, we have seen, drove William prematurely from Oxford, after a little more than a year of residence. Thence he proceeded to Utrecht, where it was then not unusual for young Englishmen and Scotsmen to complete their education. Here we find him in 1728 with his cousin Lord Villiers and Lord Buchan, father of the grotesque egotist of that name and of Henry and Thomas Erskine. Pitt writes in 1766 that Buchan was his intimate friend from the period that they were students together at Utrecht, and, when in office, he showed kindness on that ground to Lord Cardross, Buchan's eldest son, the egotist himself. Of this period some few letters to his mother survive, dutiful yet playful.

The first letter is of the formal kind then general between sons and parents, mentioning his cousin Lord Villiers, for whom he puts in a good word, not unnecessarily, as we shall see presently.

WILLIAM PITT TO HIS MOTHER.

Utrecht, Febry ye 6th N.S. 1728.

Honed Madm,—I have ye pleasure to repeat my assurances of affection & duty to you, together with my wishes for yr health: I shall take all opportunities for paying my respects to you, I hope you will now and then favr me wth a line or two, especially since you have so good a Scribe as Miss Ann to ease you of ye trouble of writing yrself. My Ld Villiers begs his Compliments may be acceptable to you, at ye same time I should not do my Ld justice if I omitted saying something in his just praise, but as I can not say enough, I forbear to say more. My Love to my Sistrs & Compliments where due. I am with all respt

Your dutiful Son
WM. PITT.

The next seems to denote a reluctant intention of returning to England to pay his family a visit.

WILLIAM PITT TO HIS MOTHER.

Utrecht Febry ye 13th 1728.

Honed Madm,—I hope I need not assure you yr letter gave me a very sensible pleasure in informing me of yr better health; I wish I may any way be able to contribute toward farther establishment of it by obeying a Command which tallies so well with my own Inclinations though at ye same time be assured, nothing less than ye pleasure of seeing you should prevail upon me to repeat so much sickness & difficulty as I met with Coming over to Holland. I believe I shall not fail in my respects to you, as often as occasion permits, though I fear my letters are hardly worth postage: unless to one who I flatter myself believes me to be

h^r most Dutifull Son

P.S. my Love to all y^e Family. Wm. Pitt.

The next letter again pleads on behalf of my Lord Villiers, for whose excess of vivacity William feels obvious sympathy. He mentions, too, and characterises with a sure touch, his old Eton friend Lyttelton, who has fallen in love with Harriot Pitt, as he was afterwards to fall in love with Ann. Lyttelton was apparently determined that the Lytteltons and Pitts should be matrimonially connected as closely as possible, for two months afterwards we find him exclaiming in a letter to his father: 'Would to God Mr. (William) Pitt had a fortune equal to his brother's, that he might make a present of it to my pretty little Molly! But unhappily they have neither of them any portion but an uncommon share of merit, which the world will not think them much the richer for.'[1] As Thomas had just married Christian Lyttelton, it is clear that the writer meditated a triple alliance as the end to be aimed at. The peerage books tell us that this pretty little Molly died unmarried.

William Pitt to his Mother, 'in Pallmall, London.'

Utrecht Feb: y^e 29^th

Hon^ed Mad^m,—The return of my L^d Villiers into England gives me an opportunity of assuring you of my respect & wishes for y^r health; I can not omitt any occasion of shewing how sensible I am of y^r affection, but must own I could have wish'd any other than this by which I am depriv'd of my L^d Villier's Company. he is recall'd perhaps deservedly: if a little Indiscretion arising from too much vivacity be a fault, my L^d is undeniably blameable; but I doubt not but my L^d

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[1] Lyttelton, Misc. Works, 665.

Grandison himself will find more to be pleas'd with in y^{e} one than to correct in y^{e} other respect. I have received so many Civilities from M^{r} Waddel, who does me y^{e} hon^{r} to be y^{e} bearer of this, y^{t} I should not do him justice to omitt letting you know how much I am obliged to him. I hope y^{e} Family is well: Lyttelton prevented you in y^{e} account of his own Madness. Sure there never was so much fine sense & Extravagance of Passion jumbled together in any one Man. Send him over to Holland: perhaps living in a republick may inspire him with a love of liberty & make him scorn his Chains. My love to all, who (a second time) I hope are well: & believe me with all respect & affection

Y^{r} most Dutiful Son

Wm. Pitt.

The third contains, perhaps, the only token of kindness between the two brothers which survives. It also alludes to Lyttelton's passion for Harriot.

WILLIAM PITT TO HIS MOTHER, 'IN PALL MALL, LONDON.'

Utrecht April y^{e} 8th N.S. 1728.

Hon^{ed} Mad^{m},—Y^{r} letters must always give me so much pleasure, y^{t} I beg no consideration may induce you to deprive me of it. they can never fail being an entertainment to me when they give me an opportunity of hearing you are well. I can not omitt thanking you for y^{e} enquiry you make about my supplies from my Brother: neither should I do him justice, if I did not assure you I receiv'd y^{e} kindest letter in y^{e} world from him: wherein he gives me y^{e} offer of going where I think most for my improvement, and assures me nothing y^{t} y^{e} estate can afford shall be denied me for my advantage & education. I hope all y^{e} family is well. Miss Anne's time is so taken up with dansing & Italien y^{t} I despair of hearing from her. I should be glad to hear what conquests miss Harriot made at y^{e} birthday. if I had not a letter from one of y^{e} Three, I must think they have forgott me. I am in pain for poor Lyttelton: I wish there was leagues of sea between him & y^e^ Charms of Miss Harriot. If he dies I shall sue her for y^e^ murder of my Friend. This Place affords so little matter of entertainment, y^t^ I shall only beg you to believe me with all respect,

Hon^{ed} Mad^{m}, Y^{r} most Dutifull Son

WM. PITT.

My love & service to my Brother & Compliments to all y^{e} Family.

His stay at Utrecht was probably not protracted, as we find no more letters from thence. The next glimpse we have of him is in January 1730, at Boconnoc. He is now established at home, rather, perhaps, from economy than of his own free will, for he disrespectfully calls Boconnoc 'this cursed hiding-place;' living in Cornwall or at Swallowfield, near Reading, another of the family residences; or on military duty at 'North'ton,' evidently Northampton, which William, however, abbreviates differently in later letters. When we consider the elaborate style and formulas of the letters of this period there seems nothing so strange as the passion for abbreviation by apostrophe, such as 'do's' for 'does,' which seems to save neither time, trouble, nor space.

In February 1731 he received a commission in the 1st Dragoon Guards, then under the command of Lord Pembroke, and we find him in country quarters at Northampton and elsewhere. In the autumn we find him once more at Boconnoc, whence he writes this more genial note to his mother.

WILLIAM PITT TO HIS MOTHER, AT BATH.

Bocconnock Oct^{br} y^{e} 17 1731.

Dear Madam,—I am, after a long Confinement at Quarters, at present confined here, by disagreeable, dirty weather, which makes us all prisoners in this little house. I knew nothing of your journey to Bath, when I came to Town, and was therefore disappointed of the pleasure of seeing you there. I see you have put a bill upon your door. Pray what do you intend to do with yourself this winter? I shou'd be mighty glad to know whether your affairs are near an Issue. I hope they will very soon leave you at Leisure to consult nothing but your health and Quiet. Be pleas'd to favour me with a Letter here, where I shall stay about a month longer; and give me the satisfaction of knowing how much you profit by the Waters. Believe me,

Dear Madam, Your dutifull affec^{t} son

Wm. Pitt.

My service to the Col: and Mrs. Bouchier: I shall Be glad to hear he makes one at the Balls.

In 1733 he set out on a foreign tour, of which we shall see more presently, and before leaving writes this note, which gives some ground for thinking that his brother helped him at least to meet the expenses of this voyage, as Lord Camelford thinks was actually the case.

William Pitt to his Mother, 'in Bateman Street, near Piccadilly, London.'

Boconnock jan: 19 : 1732/3.

Dear Madam,—I hope Miss Kitty who is now upon y^{e} Road will get safe to You: I cant omit doing Justice To your goodness in making room for her, she no doubt wanting your care very much in the ill state she is in. I continue still here and shall not set out yet this month, haveing a design to go abroad then. It is however uncertain till I hear from my Brother after he gets to Town. Miss Harriot, by her letters, Is much recovered and I flatter myself your house will prove as lucky to Poor Kitty. I need not assure you of my wishes for your health and speedy deliverance from the Misery of Late: my Love to my Sisters and believe me

Dear Madam Your most Dutifull Son

Wm. Pitt.

Miss Nanny gives her Duty to you.

He visited Paris, and Geneva, Besançon (where he lost his heart for a time), Marseilles, and Montpelier, passing the winter at Luneville.

From Paris he again writes to his mother this letter, of no significance except dutiful affection; and another from Geneva which gives a strong proof of filial obedience in giving his consent, though with strong and obvious reluctance, to one of the bills filed by his mother and Lord Grandison in reference to his father's succession.

William Pitt to his Mother, 'in Bateman Street Near Piccadilly à Londres.'

Paris May *y*^{e} 1 1733.

Dear Madam,—Though I have nothing to say to you yet of the Place I am arrived at, I cant help giving you a bare account of my being got safe to Paris: You are pleased to give me so much reason to Think you interest yourself in my welfare That I cou'd not acquit myself of my Duty In not giving you this mark of my respect and the sense I have of your goodness. I shall make my stay as short here as possible. let me have the pleasure of hearing some account of your health and situation: be pleased to direct to me Chez Monsieur Alexandre Banquier, dans la Rue St. Appoline pres de la Porte St. Denis, à Paris. I am

Madam Y^{r} most Dutifull Son

Wm. Pitt.

William Pitt to his Mother, 'in Bateman Street Piccadilly London. Angleterre.'

Geneva Sep^{r} y^{e} 17: *N.S.* 1733.

Dear Madam—I have just rec^{d} y^{e} favour of your letter of y^{e} 7th august, with the answer to a bill of complaint of my L^{d} Grandison and your self: I cou'd wish you had pleased to have let me know in general that that bill is, for at present I have no Idea of it. You assure me, Madam the answer you wou'd have me make is a form, and can lead me into no farther consequences, by engageing me In Law, or disobligeing My Brother; neither of which I am persuaded you wou'd upon any consideration involve me in: upon these grounds I readily send you my consent to the answer proposed By M^{r} Martyn in your letter. I am sorry it did not come to my hands sooner, least my answer shou'd not be time enough; and that I shou'd, by that means, be any involuntary obstacle to your affairs which wou'd be a sensible concern to

Dear Madam Y^{r} most Dutyfull affec^{e} Son

Wm. Pitt.

I leave this Place shortly not knowing yet where I shall pass y^{e} winter.

In 1734 he was back in England, doing duty with his regiment at Newbury.

It is unnecessary to speculate on the measure of success that William would have achieved in the army had he remained a soldier. That he had an early disposition to the career of arms seems probable, as his uncle, Lord Stanhope, a soldier himself, who died when William was twelve, used to call him 'the young Marshal.' It is useless to surmise; but had he not been so great an orator, one would be apt to imagine that his bent and talent lay in the direction of a military career. This at least is certain, that he sedulously employed his time, preserved from mess debauches and idle activity by his guardian demon the gout. He told Shelburne that during the time he was a cornet of horse, there was not a military book that he had not read through. This is a large statement, but denotes at least unstinted application. So his career as a subaltern, though abruptly cut short, was probably fruitful, and these studies must have been useful to the future war minister. To paraphrase Gibbon's pompous and comical phrase, the cornet of dragoons may not have been useless to the history-maker of the British Empire. For his destiny was to plan and not to conduct campaigns, and he was now to be caught in the jealous embrace of parliamentary politics.

CHAPTER III.

BUT before he launches on that troubled career, it is well to catch what glimpses we can obtain of Pitt in private life. It is the more necessary as this aspect soon disappears from sight, and his letters begin to assume that pompous and obsequious tone which we have come to believe was his natural style, but which it is obvious was assumed and affected for purposes of his own. Until he passes on to the stage, he is as bright, as lively, and as affectionate as any lad of his generation. It is beyond measure refreshing to see him at this period bantering, falling in love, the participator of revels if not a reveller himself. For afterwards no one saw him behind the scenes, no one was admitted to his presence until every feature had been composed and his wig and his vesture dramatically arranged. To catch a glimpse of him before he played a part has been hitherto an unknown luxury. But to do this we must now for a moment consider his sisters.

There were five of these, and among them was to be found in abundance the strain of violence and eccentricity that distinguished the Pitts.

'The eldest, Harriot,' writes Lord Camelford, 'was one of the most beautiful women of her time, but little produced in the great world, and died very young from anxiety of mind in consequence of a foolish engagement she entered into with Mr. Corbett, son of Sir William Corbett, to whom she was privately married.' She secured for a while, as we have seen, Lyttelton's transient affections. 'The second daughter, Catherine, had much goodness, but neither beauty nor wit to boast of. She married Robert Nedham,[1] a man of uncommon endowments, but of good Irish family and property, by whom she had several children.' The third was Ann, of whom more presently; and the fifth Mary.

The fourth was Betty, of whom, unlike three of her sisters, we seem to know too much. The curse of the Pitt blood was strong in her. Lord Camelford, her nephew, speaks of her 'diabolical disposition,' and says concisely that 'she had the face of an angel and the heart of all the furies,' and that she 'formed the most complicated character of vice that I have ever met with.' Family testimony is not always the most charitable, but outside witnesses in no way mitigate these expressions. Lord Shelburne says that she was received nowhere, owing to her profligate life. Horace Walpole brings an infamous charge against her, which we may well hope is a distortion of the natural fact that for some time she took up her abode with her eldest brother Thomas; though Thomas on parting with her said that her staying with him was extremely distasteful to him. She, in any case, openly lived as his mistress with Lord Talbot, a peer as eccentric as herself, and who promised her marriage, she said, whenever he should be free from the incumbrance of Lady Talbot.[2] Afterwards she went to Italy, became a Roman Catholic, started from Florence with the declared intention of marrying Mr. Preston, a Leghorn merchant, who seems however to have been unequal to the occasion.[1] Then she returned to England, virulent against her brother William, 'whose kindness to her,' says Horace Walpole, no biassed witness, 'has been excessive. She applies to all his enemies, and, as Mr. Fox told me, has even gone so far as to send a bundle of his letters to the author of *The Test*[2] to prove that Mr. Pitt has cheated her, as she calls it, out of a hundred a year, and which only prove that he once allowed her two, and, after all her wickedness, still allows her one.'[3] And yet on occasion she could call William the best of brothers and of men.[4] This, too, was characteristic of the breed.

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[1] Always spelt Needham in the peerage books, always Nedham by the family and those concerned.

[2] 'Villiers Pitt' to William Pitt. 'Tours, June 1, 1752.' Chatham MSS.

At this period of her life she called herself, heaven knows why, Clara Villiers Pitt, or Villiers Clara Pitt (there is an engraving of her with the latter designation), and published a pamphlet recommending magazines of corn. Of her perhaps too much has been said; but it is necessary to demonstrate that William's family relations were not always easy: Thomas reviled him, Elizabeth reviled him, Ann, whoever was in fault, caused him much trouble, while Thomas's son, whom he peculiarly cherished, regarded him with peculiar animosity.

It should be mentioned, however, that Dutens met her in France some time during Pitt's paymastership, and gives us a picture of her, which also throws light on William's strong family affection. She was then handsome, with a fine figure, her face aflame with pride and intellect, her age apparently under thirty; she was abroad for her health. With her, as a companion, chosen by her brother, was a Miss Taylor, a much prettier girl, of whom Elizabeth was vigilantly jealous and with whom Dutens fell haplessly in love. Miss Pitt was then apparently on excellent terms with her illustrious brother, and gave Dutens a letter to him. She had indeed become enamoured of the young Frenchman, a passion which, we are not surprised to hear, she carried to indecorous lengths. He, however, escaped to England and presented his letter. Pitt called on him the same afternoon and thanked him for his attentions to a beloved sister. Dutens became intimate, showed the minister his compositions, and was favoured with an inspection of Pitt's. Then all suddenly changed, and he was denied access.[1] Betty had quarrelled with the family of Dutens, and had written to beg her brother to quarrel with Dutens.[2] Dutens, she said, had boasted in company that he was well with her, and that if her fortune and family answered expectation he might marry her. Consequently she desired her brother to order his footman to kick Dutens down stairs; in any case she implored him to quarrel with the young man. With this request Pitt unhesitatingly and unreasonably complied. We see here in one incident how warm were Pitt's family affections, and the difficulties under which they were cherished.

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[1] Mann and Manners at the Court of Florence, i. 382.

[2] 'The Test' was a weekly paper published in 1756–7, written principally by Arthur Murphy, and inspired by Henry Fox, as may be seen from his letters. See too Orford, ii. 276, and Walpole to Mann, Jan. 6, 1757. There had been a previous 'Test' in 1756, of which there was published only one number, written by Charles Townshend. See Orford, ii. 218.

[3] Walpole to Mann, Jan. 17, 1757.

[4] To William Pitt, Oct. 10, 1751. Chatham MSS.

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[1] Dutens' Mémoires d'un Voyageur qui se repose, i. 31–42.

[2] Tours, June 11, 1752. Villiers Pitt to W. Pitt. Chatham MSS.

In 1761 she married John Hannan of the Middle Temple, 'of Sir William Hannan's family in Dorsetshire, a lawyer by profession, remarkable for his abilities, some years younger than myself, and possessed of a fortune superior to my own,' as Betty describes him in a hostile announcement of the engagement addressed to William. Nine years afterwards she died. Of Hannan, her husband, nothing further seems to be known; but it may be surmised that his lot was not enviable.

Mary, the youngest, seems to have been a spinster of no striking qualities. We know little of her, except that she was born in 1725 and died in 1782.[1] There exists one letter from William to her of the year 1753, and he mentions her in a letter, dated April 9, 1755, as living with him. And indeed he was always kind to her, as she seems to have habitually resided with him. Mrs. Montagu writes in July 1754: 'Miss Mary Pitt, youngest sister of Mr. Pitt, is come to stay a few days with me. She is a very sensible, modest, pretty sort of young woman, and as Mr. Pitt seem'd to take every civility shown to her as a favour, I thought this mark of respect to her one manner of returning my obligations to him.'[2] But even she, though colourless, seems not to have been wholly devoid of the Pitt temperament, though she seems to have always been on intimate terms with her family. 'She had,' says Lord Camelford, 'neither the beauty of two of her sisters, nor the wit and talents of her sister Ann, nor the diabolical dispositions of her sister Betty. She meant always, I believe, to do right to the best of her judgement, but that judgement was liable to be warped by prejudice, and by a peculiar twist in her understanding which made it very dangerous to have transactions with her.' The 'peculiar twist,' which even Mary could not escape, was innate in most Pitts.

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[1] Or 1787? as says a note in the Delany Memoirs, iv. 266. It matters little.

[2] Climenson's 'Elizabeth Montagu,' ii. 53. See, too, Mrs. Montagu's Letters, vol. iii.

We have kept Ann to the last, though she was third of the sisterhood in point of age, being born in 1712, and so four years younger than William, whose peculiar pet and crony she was for the earlier part of their lives. She was in her way almost as notable as he, and she resembled him in genius and temper, as Horace Walpole wittily observed, '*comme deux gouttes de feu.*' But drops of fire, did they exist, would probably not amalgamate for long, and one would guess that Ann and William were too much alike to remain in permanent harmony. Perhaps, too, their extreme intimacy made them too well acquainted with each other's tender points, a dangerous knowledge when coupled with great powers of sarcasm. One might surmise, too, that Pitt's wife, always apparently cold to Ann, might be disinclined to encourage the renewal of an intimacy which might once more attract William's closest confidence, though we have a letter[1] from Ann, dated 1757, in which she speaks with nothing less than rapture of Lady Hester's kindness to her. Lady Hester's immaculate caligraphy and frigid style give in our easier days an impression of distance and austerity.

Ann, when she was little more than twenty, may be said to have entered public life by becoming a maid of honour to Queen Caroline, the wife of George II. From this moment she became one of that group of distinguished women, not blue but brilliant, who adorned

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[1] Suffolk Letters, ii. 233.

England in the eighteenth century by their idiosyncrasies as much as by their abilities. She was courted and beloved by characters so famous as Gay's Duchess of Queensberry and George the Second's Lady Suffolk, and by Mrs. Montagu, who was much more blue than brilliant; for her essay on Shakespeare, so much lauded by her contemporaries, has long been dead and buried. In her dear Mrs. Pitt's conversation, declared this paragon of pedants, she saw Minerva without the formal owl on her helmet.

Among men she corresponded with her neighbour, Horace Walpole (who felt for her an affection tempered with alarm), Lord Chesterfield, and Lord Mansfield. 'She had charms enough to kindle a passion in the celebrated Lord Lyttelton,' says Camelford; Dr. Ayscough, a coarse and crafty ecclesiastic, whose acquaintance Pitt and Lyttelton had made at Oxford, and who was a trusted adviser of Frederick, Prince of Wales, sought her in marriage;[1] but there seem no other traces of the tender passion in her life. For the whim, if it indeed were not a joke, which made her ask Lady Suffolk to assist her to secure the hand of Lord Bath (then about seventy, when she herself was forty-six), hardly comes under that description. Ann was, indeed, made rather for admiration than for love. Bolingbroke, who called William 'Sublimity Pitt,' called Ann 'Divinity Pitt.'[2] But she was, one may gather, destitute of beauty,[3] and her vigorous originality of character and conversation inspired, we suspect, more awe than affection. The delightful sprightliness of youth is apt with age or encouragement to sour into a blistering insolence, and Ann had all the sarcastic powers of her brother. For example, Chesterfield calling on her in his later life complained of decay. 'I fear,' he said, 'that I am growing an old woman.' 'I am glad of it,' briskly replied Ann, 'I was afraid you were growing an old man, which you know is a much worse thing.'[1] An attractive, even fascinating, member of society, she was something too formidable for the ordinary man to take to his bosom and his hearth. Reviewing her life, we think that the real and sole object of her love was her brother William, even when her love for the moment vented itself, as love sometimes does, in quarrel. Strife was necessary to the Pitts, and when they waged war with each other it was no battle of roses. The disputes of lovers and relatives, like amicable lawsuits, are apt to become serious affairs, and with this race they were conflicts of the tomahawk. Be that as it may, and whatever the cause, William and Ann adored each other, kept house together, and then quarrelled with prodigious violence and effect. At present we are not near that point. Ann is her brother's 'little Nan,' 'little Jug,' and he is writing her the delightful letters contained in this chapter, written, says Camelford, who preserved them, with the passion of a lover rather than that of a brother. To us they represent rather the special relation of a brother and sister, when affection and intimacy have grown with their growth, from the nursery and the schoolroom to riper years, not unfrequently the sweetest and tenderest of human connections. Our only regret must be that William did not cherish Ann's letters as she did his, for they may well have possessed her peculiar charm. 'She equalled her brother, Lord Chatham,' writes her nephew, who knew them both well, 'in quickness of parts, and exceeded him in wit and in all those nameless graces and attentions by which conversation is enlivened and endeared.' At the same time, one may reluctantly admit that such letters of hers as survive, give one little desire for more. The same, however, may be said of her great brother's habitual epistles (for they can be called nothing less); and their correspondence together was something apart, the gay and engaging eclogue of two young hearts; so that Ann, like William, must have been at her best in her early letters to him.

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[1] Camelford MS. Cf., too, William's letter of Sept. 29, 1730.

[2] Thackeray, i. 158 note.

[3] There is a crayon portrait of her at Boconnoc, which the writer has not seen. It 'represents the strong contemplative face of a woman well past her first prime,' and was taken, apparently, in 1765.

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[1] Seward's Anecdotes, ii. 355.

And so we set forth these delightful letters of a lad of twenty-two to his favourite sister. They need no comment; of the allusions no explanation can now be given or would be worth giving; but the letters speak for themselves.[1]

Boconnock, Jan^y 3, 1730.

Dear Nanny,—As you have degraded my sheets From y^e rank and Quality of a Letter, merely for Containing a few Innocent Questions, I am determin'd to avoid such rigour for the future by Confining myself to bare narration: first, Then we are to have a ball this week at Mr. Hawky's Child-feast, (a Heathenish Name for the Christian Institution of Baptism), where the Ladies intend to shine most irresistably, and like enfants perdus, thrust themselves in the very front of y^e Battle, break some stubborn Tramontanne Hearts, or Die of the spleen upon the spot. The next thing I have to say,

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[1] All these letters from William to Ann Pitt come from the papers at Dropmore, unless where noted otherwise.

(Don't be afraid of a Question) Is, that we set out y^e^ end of the same week, and propose seeing you about a week after our departure. I'l say no more, least I should forget y^e^ restrictions I have Laid myself under and launch out into some Impious enquiries that don't suit my sex. Adieu, Dearest Nanny, till I have the pleasure of seeing you at Bath.[1]

The next letter is from Swallowfield, one of the Pitt houses. Ayscough has proposed to Ann. He is a favourite butt of William's, who seems to rejoice in his discomfiture.

*Swallowfeild, Sep. y^e^ 29^th^*, 1730.

I am quite tired of waiting for a letter from my Dear Nanny, and am determin'd by way of revenge to fatigue you as much by obliging you to read a very long letter from myself, as you have me with the eager expectation of receiving one from you. The excuse you assign'd for not doing it sooner fills me with apprehensions for your health; Is it that you still converse only with Doctor Bave,[2] or that you have already changed the old Physician for the young Galant? Is it the want of conversation That denies you matter, or the entire engagement to it that won't allow you time for a letter? Be it as it will, I flatter myself into a beleif of the Latter, chusing rather to be very angry with you for your neglect of me, than sincerely afflicted for your want of health. I desire I may know from yourself what advances you make towards your recovery; you never can want a subject to write to me upon, while you have it in your power to entertain me with a prospect of seeing you perfectly restored to health, and in consequence of that to the sprightly exertion of your understanding and full display (as my Lady Lynn elegantly has it) of your Primitive Beauties. Why shou'd I mention Ayscough's overthrow! That is a conquest perhaps of a nature not so brilliant as to touch your heart with much exultation; But lett me tell you, a man of his wit in one's suite has no Ill air; You may hear enough of eyes and flames and such gentle flows of tender nonsense from every Fop that can remember, but I can assure you Child, a man can think that declares his Passion by saying Tis not a sett of Features I admire, &c. Such a Lover is the Ridiculous Skew,[1] who Instead of whispering his soft Tale to the woods and lonely Rocks, proclaims to all the world he loves Miss Nanny—Fâth (*sic*)—with the same confidence He wou'd pronounce an Heretical Sermon at St. Mary's. I must quit your admirer to enquire after the condition of the Colonel and his Lady,[2] and to assure' em of my most hearty wishes for Their health and happiness. I beg leave to repeat the same to Miss Lenard, who I hope will recruit her spirits after so much affliction with yᵉ holsome Application of a Fiddle. I shall communicate to you next Post a Translation of an Elegy of Tibullus By Lyttelton, who orders me to say it was done for you:[3] I shall then be able to say whether I go to Cornwall or no, so that you may know how to direct to me.

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[1] 'To Mrs. Ann Pitt, at Mrs. Phillips's, at Bath. T. Pitt Free.'

[2] Dr. Charles Bave, a physician of the highest character at Bath. See note on Vol. I., p. 408, of Lady Suffolk's Letters.

I need not say what you are to do with the hair enclosed to you from Mrs. Pitt. Adieu dear Nanny.

The next letter is from Blandford, where the writer is stopping on his way to Boconnoc, which he gives as his address at the end of the letter. He is still occupied with his sister's career as a flirt.

Blanford: Oct. yᵉ 13th. 1730.

As we mutually complain'd of the silence of Each other, so I conclude we mutually have Forgiven it: But had I continued it, my Dear, Till I had something more entertaining to talk of Than an execrable journey to Cornwall, perhaps You might not have had much reason to complain of me. I have not had a minute's pleasure from my own thoughts since I left Swallowfeild, till now I give them up entirely to you, and Paint you to myself in the hands of some agreeable Partner, as happy as the new way of wooing can make you. I can not help suggesting To you here a little grave advice, which is, not to lett your glorious Thirst of Conquest transport You so far, as to lose your health in acquiring Hearts: I know I am a bold man to dissuade One from dansing a great deal that danses very gracefully; but once more I repeat, beware of shining too much; content yourself to be healthy first, even tho you suspend your triumphs a week or ten days. I beg I may not be misconstrued To insinuate anything here in favour of my own sex, or to serve the sinister ends of an envious Sister or two; no; I scorn such mean artifices. In God's Name, when the waters have had their Effect, give no Quarter, faites main basse upon all you meet, à coup d'eventelle, à coup d'Oeil: spare neither age nor condition: but like an Unskilfull Generall don't begin to take the Feild till your military stores are provided and your magazines well furnish'd. Thus Have I acquitted myself not only as an able but honest Counsellour, and ventured to represent to you your true Interest, tho' never so distastefull. Adieu, my Dear Nanny, till you renew our Conversation by a speedy letter. My sincere respects to the Col. and family.

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[1] This must almost certainly be Ayscough, in spite of 'Skew's' being the hereditary nickname of the Fortescue family.

[2] These are probably Colonel and Mrs. Lanoe, with whom Ann appears to be staying at Bath.

[3] Lyttelton's Misc. Works, 619.

Boconnock Near Bodmin.

Next comes the letter in which he curses Boconnoc, but only because of its remoteness. He lives, it may be presumed, at the family house from economy. But he is not at ease about Ann's health, and longs to be at Bath to be with her.

Boconnock. Nov^{r} y^{e} 15th 1730.

I read all my Dear Nanny's letters with so much pleasure, that I grow more and more out of temper with y^{e} remoteness of this cursed hiding place, where The distance of some hundred Miles denies me the Repetition of it so often as I eagerly desire. But as much as I am pleas'd with the prettiness of your style and manner of writing, I cant help feeling a sensible uneasiness to hear no news of your amendment; cou'd my Dear Girl add that to them, they wou'd give me a satisfaction that wou'd bear some proportion to The degree of your Esteem, you convince me I possess. We are all sollicitous to hear Doctor Baves opinion of your case. which I beg you will not fail to send me in your next letter, You will before this reaches you, have rec^{d} a letter from my Brother, which I hope will give you perfect satisfaction with regard to your further demands. As I shall not go to London Before my Brother, it will not be absolutely in my Power to see you in my way: I am not however without hopes of prevailing upon him to go from Blanford to Bath, which is not above thirty Miles. Beleive me I shall have it at heart to make you this visit, having two such powerful motives to it, as my Own Pleasure and yours. All proofs of your affection To me are highly agreeable, and I am willing to measure the value you may set upon mine to you, By the same favourable standard. Be assured therefore I shall lett slip no occasion of giving what I shall in my turn receive with infinite pleasure: Pray assure Colonel Lanoe and his family of my good wishes; and let us know what benefit they receive from the waters. I have time for no more. Adieu My Dear Girl.[1]

He was now apparently with his regiment at Northampton, though he was not gazetted till February.

Northton. Jan. 7, 1731.

I am just in my Dear Nanny's Condition, when she tells me she sat down determin'd to write tho' she had Nothing to say: but I know not how it comes to pass, One has a pleasure in saying and hearing very nothings, where one loves: while I have my paper before me I Fancy myself in company with you, and while you read my letters, you hear me chattering to you, tis at least an interruption to working or reading, that serves to diversify Things a little, to be forced to run your eyes over a side or Two of paper; tho' it says nothing at all. I remember, when I saw you last, you had a thought of reading and Translating Voiture's letters: I beg you will take him up as soon as you have got through this of mine, To recompense you for the dullest of Letters, what will you Have me do? I come from two hours muzzy conversation To a house full of swearing Butchers and Drunken Butter women, and in short all the blessings of a market day: In such a situation what can the wit of man suggest to him? Oh for the restless Tongue of Dear little Jug! She never knows the painful state of Silence In the midst of uproar: for my Part I think I cou'd write a better letter in a storm at sea, or in my own way, at a Bombardment, than in my present situation. I won't have this called a Conversation: it shall pass for a mute interview. adieu my Dearest Nanny: preserve your health is y^e^ only word of consequence I can say to-night.

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[1] 'Mrs. Ann Pitt. at Col. Lanoe's at Bath.'

Compliments to my Sis. Pitt. and all my Friends that come in your way.[1]

Now, for the only time in his life perhaps, we find him engaged reluctantly in drinking bouts, the necessary discipline of a military mess in those days. He refers to the amiability of Charles Feilding in a later letter.

Northton. Febry: ye 9. 1731.

I have been a monstrous time out of my Dearest Nanny's Company; the date of your Letter before me, Me fait de sanglantes reproches: I say nothing in my own behalf, but Frankly confess, in aggravation of my silence, that I have neglected you for a course of drunken conversation, which I have some days been in. The service wou'd be the most inactive life in ye world if Charles Feilding was out of it; As long as he is with us, we seldom remain long without pretty smart Action: I am just releiv'd by one night's rest, from an attaque that lasted sixteen hours, but as a Heroe should never boast, I have done y^e^ state some service and they know't—no more of that.

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[1] 'To Mrs. Ann Pitt jun. at Boconnock near Bodmin Cornwall.'

What shall I talk of to my dear Girl? I have told her I love Her, in every shape I cou'd think of: we'l converse in French and tell one another y^e^ same things under the Dress of Novelty. Mon aimable Fille, rien ne m'est si doux que de recevoir de votre part les marques d'une ardente amitié, si ce n'est de vous en donner moi-meme. I did not think I cou'd have wrote a sentence so easily, mais les paroles obeissent toujours aux sentiments du coeur. Let me tell you once more, in plain English, your letter was infinitely pretty; you may leave off Voiture whenever you please. I hope little Jug is still talking at Boconnock; how Fares it with my Statira, my angry Dear? I can think of nothing so likely to bring her into Temper, as telling Her, her Skew will soon revisit y^e^ groves of Boconnock, where they may pass y^e^ Long Day, and tend a few sheep together. I beg she'l accept of y^e^ following stanza I met with by chance in some french poesy, and put a Tune to it, which She may warble in honour of her gentle loveing shepherd:

Dans ces Lieux solitaires
Daphnis est de retour:
Deesse de Cythere
Celebre ce grand jour:
Rapellez sur ces rives
Les amours envolés,
Les graces fugitives
et les Ris exilés.

my Love and services to all Freinds: My Brother gives me y^e^ pleasure of hearing my Sist^r^ Pitt is very well: pray make my apologies for not writing to her.

Adio Anima mia bella,
Dolce speranza mia.

W^M^ PITT.

He has now come to London apparently to kiss hands for his commission. How little George II. can have realised what his relations were to be with the raw young cornet.

London: March ye 5: 1731.

I thank my Dearest Nanny for her Letter Though it abused me, I think without Reasonable Grounds: tis true I dont write so often as I wish to see you, yet I won't allow I have let our conversation suffer any considerable Interruption. I Have had no opportunity yet of cultivating any farther acquaintance with Mr Molinox than by receiving his name and leaving Mine: I shall need no other inducement to his Freindship than the presumption of his civility to you, which your letter gives me reason to think: I shall ever esteem Any Man deserving of my regard who loves In any degree what so thoroughly merits and possesses my Heart as my Dear Girl. I have the pleasure of telling you my Commission is sign'd and I have Kiss'd hands for it, so that my Country Quarters won't be Cornwall this Summer. You are like to have Company soon with you, Hollins having ordered my Sister Pitt the Bath immediately: what becomes of the two poor vestals I dont yet know. the Town produces nothing new, as the Place you are in I suppose, produces absolutely nothing at all: kill some of your time by writing often to one who will always contribute to make you pass it more pleasurably, when in his Power. Adieu, recover yr health, and preserve Chearfulness enough to give your Understanding a fair light.[1]

Yrs most sensibly

W. Pitt.

The next letter was written in the midst of what would now be called a bear-fight, carried on apparently in the room of the demure Lyttelton.

London. March ye 13: 1731.

I am now lock'd into George's room; the girls Thundering at the door as if Heaven and Earth would come together: I am certainly the warmest Brother, or the coldest Gallant In the Universe, to suffer the gentle Impertinencies the sportly Sollicitations of two girls not quite despicable without emotion, and bestow my Time and spirits upon a Sister: But in effect the thing is not so strange or unreasonable, for every Man may have Girls worthy his attention, but few, sisters so conversible as my Dear Nanny. Tis impossible to say much, amidst this rocking of the doors Chairs and tables: I fancy myself in a storm Of the utmost danger and horror; and were I really in one, I would not cease to think of my Dear Girl, till I lost my fears and Trepidations in the object of my tenderest care and sincerest zeal. let the winds roar, and the big Torrent burst! I won't leave my Nanny for any Lady of you all, but with the warmest assurance of unalterable affection, Adieu.[1]

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[1] 'To Mrs. Ann Pitt at Mrs. Phillips's at Bath. T. Pitt Free.'

He is now once more in country quarters, grievously hipped. The allusion to the barmaid 'who young at the bar is just learning to score' reads like a line from some forgotten song. In his despair he threatens to get drunk.

Northampton April y^e^ 9th 1731.

After neglecting my Dear Girl so many Posts In the joys of London, I should be deservedly Punished by the Loss of your correspondence now I very much stand in need of it: I am come from an agreeable set of acquaintance in Town to a Place, where the wings of Gallantry must Be terribly clip'd, and can hope to soar No higher than to Dolly, who young at the Bar is just Learning to score—what must I do? my head is not settled enough to study; nor my heart light enough to find amusement In doing nothing. I have in short no resource But flying to the conversation of my distant Freinds and supplying the Loss of the jolis entretiens I have left behind by telling my greifs and hearing myself pity'd. I shall every Post go near to waft a sigh from Quarters to the Bath, which you shall rally me very prettyly upon, suppose me in Love, laugh at my cruel fate a little, then bid me hope for a Fair wind and better weather. I entreat you Be very trifling and badine, send me witty letters or I must chear my heart at the expense Of my head and get drunk with bad Port To kill time. My sister is by this time with You and I hope the Girls: my Love to her and bid her send away her husband and drink away. my spirits flag, et je n'en puis plus, adieu.

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[1] Same address.

One would guess, but one can only guess, that the following letter referred to some project of marrying William, which Ann dreaded as causing a separation from her.

*Northampton. May y^e^* 21: 1731.

What shall I say to my Dearest Nanny for sinking into a tenderness below y^e^ dignity of her spirit and Genius? I sat down with a resolution to scold you off for a little Loving Fool, but Find myself upon examination your very own Brother and as fond of receiving such testimonies of the Excess of y^r^ affection, as you are of Bestowing them: t'wou'd be more becoming y^e^ Firmness of a man to reprove you a little upon this occasion, and advise you to fortify your Mind against any such Separation as you so kindly apprehend, but as your fears are, I believe at present Groundless, I chuse rather To talk to you like an affectionate Freind, than a stern Philosopher and return every Fear you Feel for me with a most ardent wish for your Happiness: Beleive me t'will wound my Quiet to be forced to do anything to disturb yours, But shou'd such an event as you are alarm'd at, arrive, your own reason will soon convince your tender Fears, there is but one Party for me to take: All the Dictates of Prudence, all the Considerations of Interest must determine me to it: But I am Insensibly drawn in to prove I ought to do, what There is no appearance I shall have in my Power to do, therefore my Dear Girl, suspend your Inquietudes, as I will my Arguments, and think I Long to see you in y^e^ full enjoyment of y^r^ Health and Spirits, which I hope to be able to do early in August. Adieu my Dearest Nanny, Love me and preserve your own happiness.

I never rec^{d} a Line from my Sister Pitt.

But will write to her soon. I hope she is well.[1]

This next letter is taken up with poking fun at Ayscough. The 'poor nuns' would be Pitt's sisters, whom he calls elsewhere the 'poor vestals.'[2]

North'ton June y^{e} 17: 1731.

My Dear Nanny's letter from Bath gave me so many Pleasures that I don't know which to thank her for first: the Prettiness of it tells me she has more sense than her sex, the affection of it declares she is more capable of Freindship Than her sex: and to compleat my joy, It assures me she no longer wants her health: which may Heaven continue to my Dear Girl! If anything can make me devout, t'is my Zeal for your happiness: However don't let the Parson[3] know this Prayer escaped me for fear she (*sic*) shou'd be malicious enough to Tell me of it in company some time or other at Quarters. I am glad he is with you: he will prove as good an enlivener of the spirits and invigourate the conversation amongst you, as much as Bath waters do The Blood. Be sure not to suffer him to be Indolent and withdraw his Wit from y^{e} Service of y^{e} Company: I know y^{e} Dog sometimes grows tired of being laugh't at: But no matter: insist upon his being a Man of humour every Day but Sunday. I expect you will all Three Lose your reputations in y^{e} country for him: and indeed there's no Intimacy with one of His Cloath without too much room for Suspicion: But as you don't expect to make your fortune there, The thing is not so deplorable. You will be mutually Happy in meeting the Poor Nuns again: I very much fear I shall not partake of that pleasure so soon as August:

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[1] 'To Mrs. Ann Pitt, at Bath.'

[2] Ante, p. 56.

[3] Dr. Ayscough?

Beleive me I long for nothing more than to see you all well and happy: I break off y^e Conversation with great reluctance To go to Supper: Adieu Dearest Nanny.

Ann was now to be a maid of honour and venture on the new world of a court. So she asks advice of her sage young brother, and he gives his admonitions in French, probably from fear of the Post Office.

Undated.

Vous voulez que je vous dise, mon aimable, ce que je pense de la vie que vous allez mener à la cour; votre Interest, qui me touche de près, m'y fait faire mille Reflexions: en voici mon Idée. Le cour me paroit une mer peu aisée à naviger, mais qui ne manque pas d'ouvrir aux mariniers bien entendûs le commerce le plus avantageux; j'entens l'art de connoitre le monde et de s'en faire connoitre agreablement: Un Esprit habile sans artifice, et un coeur gai sans legereté vous rendent ce voiage pleins d'agrements et de plaisirs, pendant que la vertu qui ne se dement jamais, est l'Etoile fixe qui vous empeche de vous y egarer.

En effet n'est-il pas à souhaiter pour une Personne qu'on aime, et dont on connoit bien les forces, de la voir exposée à un tel point, qu'elle ne puisse s'en tirer qu'avec le secours du bon sens et de la Prudence? Ce sont les difficultés qui donnent au merite tout son jour, et souvent elles en font naitre: Vous en avez, mon aimable, et il ne s'agit que de le mettre en oeuvre: mais voici ce qui vous embarasse: La Modestie, qui en est une Considerable, cache mille autres vertus en se montrant toujours elle-meme; Elle ne laisse pas en cela de faire un peu le Tyran: elle nous fait souvenir de ces meres qui par un excez de Pruderie derobent leurs Filles aux yeux du monde, toutes aimables qu'elles soient, mais que cette Modestie songe à prendre quelque fois le Parti de la retraite, et qu'elle scache qu'on ne la regrette gueres, quand on voit quelque belle vertu briller à sa place.

à mon avis il n'y a rien de si outrée que l'idée que de certaines gens se sont fait de la cour des Princes: Ils ne s'y figurent que l'Envie et ses noirceurs, la Perfidie, et les suites funestes de l'amour dereglé: ils en enlaidissent tellement la ressemblance qu'on ne la reconnoit plus: pour vous, ma chère, Ie ne vous conseille ni de vous troubler la cervelle d'affreuses Chimeres, ni de vous endormir tout à fait a l'ombre de la securité. Pour ce qui est de l'amour, il seroit ridicule d'entreprendre de vous en Tracer le Portrait, Il ne se fera comprendre que par Luimeme: en un mot, qu'il soit un Dieu bienfaisant ou qu'il ne soit qu'un Demon malin, donnez vous garde de l'offenser, car, effectivement, c'est un Personnage à represailles: enfin en quelque caractere que vous le voyez, Il vous le faudra respecter: dans l'un vous l'aimerez comme fidele chretienne; dans l'autre, reverez le afin qu'il ne vous fasse point de mal. adieu ma tres chere.

William has now set out on his foreign tour, of which we caught some glimpses in letters to his mother. We have already had his letter to his mother from Paris.

Paris May y^{e} 3$^{rd:}$ N.S. 1733.

I don't know whether my Dearest Nanny is not at this moment angry with me for not writing sooner; But cou'd you see the hurry this Place throws a man into upon his arrival, you wou'd rather wonder I write at all. I have done nothing since I came to Paris, but run up and down and see; so that beleive me it is a sort of Novelty to set down and think: Tis with pleasure I return to you from The variety of fine sights which have engaged me; my eyes have been long enough entertain'd, to give my Heart leisure to indulge itself in a short conversation with my Dear Girl. It may sound oddly to say I love you best at a great distance, but surely absence best shows us the Value of a Thing, by making us feel how much we want it: I find already I shall have many vacant hours that wou'd be agreably fill'd up with the company of something one esteems; but I must comfort myself à la francoise, Ie bannis la Sagesse et la Raison; c'est de notre vie le Poison. I shall set out for Besancon in franche comté In three or four days, where I shall stay till autumn. write often and direct to me chez Mons^{r} Alexandre Banquier dans la Rue St. Appoline Près de la Porte St. Denis à Paris who will Take care to send them to me. I hope you like your way of Life better every Day; I don't know whether you may not be said to be travelling too; France is hardly newer to me than Court was to you; may you find the Country mend upon you the farther you advance in it: bon voyage ma chere, and may you find at your journey's end as good an inn as matrimony can afford you. I am

Your most aff^{t} Brother
W. Pitt.

My Love to Kitty and Harriot. I cou'd not write to all and you are the only one I was sure to find.

I write this Post to Skew; if he is not in Town, enquire at his Lodgings for y^{e} letter and send it. I hope my Brother rece^{d} my Letter.[1]

The next letter leaves him at Besançon, the ancient capital of Franche-Comté, wrested from the Spaniards in 1678, and now become a French fortress, famous for its silver watches. Here Pitt loses his heart.

Besancon. June the 5: 1733. *N.S.*

I receiv'd my Dear Nanny's letter yesterday: it has no Date, but I imagine by some of the Contents it has been a tedious time upon the road. The direction I left was a very proper one and particular enough, Alexander being generally known at Paris, so that the street of his abode is unnecessary: however To be very sure of meeting with no disappointment In a pleasure I desire to indulge myself in as often as you'l let me, direct to me at Alexander's dans la rue St. Appoline près de la Porte St. Denis à Paris, who will carefully transmit all letters to me, wherever I am. The pleasure you give me in the account of Kitty's recovery, is disagreably accompanied with that of Poor Harriot's Relapse into an ill State of

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[1] 'To The Hon^{ble} Mrs. Ann Pitt at St. James's House Londres.'

Health; which I too much fear will never be removed till her mind is made a little easy: I never think of her but with great uneasiness, my tenderness for her begins to turn to sorrow and affliction; I consider her in a great degree lost, and buried almost in an unsuccessfull Ingagement: You have all my warmest wishes for your happiness and prosperity. I persuade myself you are in the high road to them, make the best of your way I beg of you; and contrive to finish your Travels by the time of my return. I can say but little of Besancon yet: The Place is externally pretty enough how it will prove upon a more intimate knowledge of it, I can't say. My Lord Walgrave was so good as to procure me letters For the Commandant and a Lady of this Place who passes for the finest Woman here. I have had the honour to dine with her at her campagne, where I was very handsomely regaled: what ressource Her acquaintance will be, I shall be better able to judge after another visit or two.

Skew hinted something to me concerning Kitty, which he said was not quite chimerical. If it be any suite of my Mother's project for her I doubt the Success. I have not Heard a word from my Brother, tho' I have wrote to him three times. If he han't received them all let him know it.

I find Sir James Gray here, who is a very pretty sort of Man and once more my schoolfellow; between my letters and the acquaintance he has made in the Town, we shall be of some Use to one another. Adieu.

Your most aff^{t} Freind and Brother

W. Pitt.

I wish you joy of Lord William's Match.

He is next found at Marseilles, where he discovers that he is still sore from his love affair at Besançon.

Marseilles. sep: y^{e} 1: 1733.

j'ai honte à regarder la datte de votre derniere lettre, à laquelle je vai faire reponse: vous me dites ma Chere, que vous etes fort aise que vos lettres me fassent plaisir, d'autant

plus que vous croiez en avoir obligation plutot à ma prevention pour vous, qu'à votre merite. Qu'y a-til de plus obligeant Pour moi ou de plus injuste pour vous meme?

Il est vrai que je vous aime à un point qui passe bien souvent dans le monde pour aveuglement: mais je prétens vous aimer en connoisseur, je veux que le gout et la raison fassent ici ce que l'entetement fait d'ordinaire ailleurs. ne guerirez vous jamais de cette modestie outrée? de grace ne faites plus Tort à vous meme par une humilité qui n'est pas de ce bas lieu, et cessez de louer mon amitié aux depens de mon gout.

Vous voiez par la datte de ceci que je suis à Marseilles, j'y suis depuis deux jours et conte d'en partir dans deux ou trois jours pour Monpelier, où nous ferons un sejour à peu pres comme celui que nous ferons ici: je crois passer l'hiver a Luneville, et de[1] a Lyon par Geneve et le long du Rhin à Strasbourg d'où je me rendrai en Lorraine. je viens de quitter Besancon avec infiniment de regrets: voulez vous que je me confesse à vous? j'y avois un plus fort attachement que je ne croiois, avant que de me Trouver sur le Point de partir: tant il est vrai que l'on ne sent jamais si bien le prix d'une chose Que lorsque il la faut perdre. Nous y avions de fort aimables connoissances, et je trouve presentement à plus de soixante Lieues de loin, que j'y aurois passer l'hyver volontiers, je n'en ai pas tout à travers du coeur, mais toutefois j'en ai. adieu ma chere, faites moi d'abord reponse, et imputez mon silence passé à toute autre cause que à un refroidissement pour vous. je suis avec tout la tendresse du monde

votre affectionné Serviteur
W. PITT.[2]

And now he has arrived at Luneville, the city of the moon, once dedicated to the worship of Diana, but at this time devoted to the manufacture of glass and pottery. In four years it was to be enlivened by the gay court of Stanislas;

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[1] Illegible.

[2] 'To The Hon^{ble} M^{rs} Ann Pitt at M^{rs} Richard's In Pallmall, London. Angleterre.'

but it was now a provincial town, occupied provisionally by the French in defiance of its absentee Duke, Francis, afterwards Emperor of Germany. Pitt is not yet cured of his passion. It is painful to him to revive it by giving a description of the lady, and he seems to feel her want of noble birth as if he had contemplated marriage.

Luneville ce 12: *d'octob. N.S.* 1733.

Votre lettre me réjouit fort en m'apprenant que votre vie est heureuse: quand vous ne me manderiez que cela une fois la semaine, votre commerce me donneroit toute la satisfaction du monde: mais d'ailleurs il y'a, mon aimable, un tour agreable dans tout ce que vous me dites, qui me rend votre conversation charmante. La tendresse de ses amis, en quelque expression que ce soit, nous touche; mais quand elle se presente à nous d'une maniere aisée et delicate, l'esprit participe à la satisfaction que la coeur en recoit.

Vous me demandez le Portrait de la Belle: faites vous bien attention à quoi vous m'allez engager? je commence à respirer et vous voulez me replonger dans les douleurs que m'a causées sa perte, en m'obligeant de renouveller dans mon esprit les traits qui s'en etoient emparés. L'absence est un grand Medecin: je me suis si bien trouvé de ses remedes que je ne desespere pas d'en pouvoir revenir: laissez lui faire encore un peu et je vous ferai le Portrait, que vous me demandez, assez à l'aise. Cependant trouvez bon que je vous en fasse seulement un crayon (à la hate?) en vous disant que, quoique son coeur fût certainement neuf, son esprit ne l'etoit point (j'en parle comme de feu ma Flamme) que sa Taille etoit grande et des plus parfaites, son air simple avec quelque chose de noble; Pour ses Traits je n'y touche pas: suffit que vous sachiez que ce fut de ces beautés d'un grand effet, et que sa Physionomie prononcât quelque chose des qualités d'une ame admirable. ne vous attendez pas pour le present Que je vous en donne un detail si exact que vous en puissiez la reconnoittre si elle se trouvoit sur votre chemin: je n'ose m'y laisser aller

davantage: nous en parlerons un jour plus amplement: mais avant de quitter son chapitre il faut que je vous dise tout: Elle n'a point de titre ni de grand nom qui impose; et c'est là le diable. C'est simplement Madamoiselle de—fille cadette de Mons^r de—ecuyer à Besancon: Religieuse, Vous avez bien dit que j'en parlerai volontiers: de quoi vous avisez vous de mettre un homme sur le chapitre de ses amours? Vous saviez que quand on y est, on ne scait jamais où finir, et que vous vous exposez à essuier tout ce qui vient au bout de sa plume. voila trop parler de mes affaires: parlons un peu des votres: faisons des demandes par rapport à certain peuple connu sous le titre d'amants. Parler franchement et donnez m'en des nouvelles. vous ne scauriez etre si content que vous l'etes so vous n'aviez range quelque coeur sous vos lois: adieu: aimons nous toujours et songeons a nous render heureux.

W. Pitt.

No one can be more sensible than I am of the esteem of Charles Feilding, nor more disposed to do justice to the amiableness of his character.

Six weeks afterwards all trace of his love affair has disappeared; it is not the mere cessation of pain, it is oblivion.

Luneville. Nov. y^e 22: 1733.

Les verités obligeantes que vous me dites, ne me sont pas seulement cheres par le fond de tendresse qu'elles me font vous connoitre pour moi, elles le sont au dernier point par la maniere agreable dont vous les tournez: j'aime autant que votre coeur s'explique avec moi en bon Anglois qu'en bon francois, d'autant plus que ce qu'on dit en sa langue maternelle paroit encore plus Naturel, et c'est la ce qui fait le principal merite des lettres d'amitié. je suis charmé, mon aimable Bonne, de l'air content dont vous m'ecrivez, j'ai un plaisir aussi sensible à me figurer que vous etes heureuse, que vous etes gaie, que j'en pourrois repentir moimême de tout ce que la joie et la gaieté me pourroit offrir: je vous suis present que

si l'etois Dans le cabinet à Cote de votre Toilette. Je n'ai plus rien à vous dire de Mademoiselle.

C'etoit de ces flammes passageres, un eclair qui a passé si vîte qu'il n'en reste pas le moindre vestige. j'ai oublié jusque au portrait que je vous en ai fait : n'allez pas m'accuser de legereté, voila comme il faut être en voiage : je me fais un fond de constance pour mon retour. Souvenez vous de garder votre parole en me faisant la confidence de vos premieres amours : que le terme ne vous choque pas, je l'entends avec les circonstances qu'il faut. Je ne doute pas que vous ne m'en fassiez bientot, au moins si vous avez autant de franchise que je me l'imagine. adieu, ma chere, je vous—(torn)—de terribles bagatelles : mais je ne'en scai rien—(torn)

Votre tres affectionné

W. Pitt.

If Miss Molly Lyttelton is in Town, I wish you may see one another often, and make a Friendship.[1]

The two following letters contain obscure allusions, which, so far as we can now interpret them, appear to indicate that Thomas Pitt at any rate was at this time a ministerialist and supporter of Sir Robert Walpole.

*Newbury Octb^r^ y^e^* 24 : 1734.

Dear Nanny,—You may conceive I was a good deal surprised at M^r^ Harrison's modest proposal : I thought it indeed so monstrous, that y^e^ best way of treating it was not to vouchsafe it any answer, especially as it did not come immediately from Him : I cannot conceive how poor Harriot cou'd think of employing Herself in such a message, or at least that she wou'd not understand my neglect in answering it, to be (what it is) a thorough contempt of the Noble Colonel's ridiculous offer. My first astonishment is a little abated by hearing he was encouraged to it by my Brother at Paris, I mean my astonishment as to him ; For the latter, I have done wondering at any the most Inscrutable of his proposed designs: it must be confess'd, this last (if true) is not inferiour to any of the brightest passages of his conduct: removeing me to bring in a Person declared in Opposition, and who it is proposed shou'd pay me, instead of reimbursing him his expences at Oakhampton. I can talk no more of him; I'll endeavour to put him out of my mind till January.

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[1] 'To the Hon^ble^ Mrs Ann Pitt at St. James's House London. Angleterre.'

I am extremely pleased to see the time of my deliverance from my Inn approach, a month more will bring me to you, when I shall be as happy as the endless disapointments and difficulties I have to encounter, will allow me: all I have of happiness is confined to you and my friend George; you may easily judge of my Impatience to be with you; I suppose he's still at Stowe. I am pleased with y^e honour done me to (*sic*) Lady Suffolk, the more as I am sure it gave you pleasure. Adieu Dear Nanny.

Most affec^y y^rs
W. PITT.[1]

Newbury. Nov: y^e 7. 1734.

Dear Nanny,—I have been persecuted with a succession of little impertinent complaints; I have been deliver'd some time of my broken tooth, by the most dextrous operator, I beleive, in the World, but am at present in my Room with a sore throat, which is very troublesome to me. I wou'd not have You be very uneasy at Harrison's proposal; it appears to me, as it did at first, of no consequence, and deserves being spoken of only for the Impertinence of it. I am persuaded it is no more than an absurd, sudden thought of y^e Coll'^s; 'tis hardly possible my Brother shou'd have given his consent to it as a foundation for Harrison to proceed upon with me. My Brother's Interest no doubt do's not persuade him to such a bargain between Harrison and me: if he intends to consult that, in the disposition of this seat in Parliament, he must certainly rather oblige me to accept of satisfaction for the loss of it by something he may obtain for me, and chuse a man more agreeable to Sir Robt. than Harrison, who will put him two thousand pounds in Pocket: I am very much deceived if I hear any thing more of it. You misunderstood me in thinking I had given no sort of answer to the proposal. I was, I confess, little sollicitous about giving a speedy one or a very particular one: I said to Harriot in general that I was extremely surprised at the offer: that an answer was almost needless for the Coll., if he had thought of it since, must be able to guess what answer it deserved. that I was sorry she had employ'd herself at all in so strange a Proposal, in short something to that effect. I apprehend no difficulties from this affair; if I have any to encounter they'l come from another Quarter. I wrote to a certain Gentleman[1] above a month ago, without answer, so judge of his kind disposition towards me. my Lord Pembroke is very good in leaving it in my Power to come to Town, if I found it necessary. I have at present no thoughts of making use of his Indulgence. I want to see you more than you can imagine. Adieu:

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[1] 'To the Hon^ble M^rs Ann Pitt at St. James's London. Free—Will, Herbert.'

Y^rs most affec^ly

W. Pitt.

Lady Suffolk, Ann's principal friend at Court, has now retired from an ungrateful servitude. The loss must have been great to Ann, who required more than most an experienced and sagacious friend at her elbow.

Newbury Nov: y^e 17: 1734.

Dear Nanny,—I was persuaded my Lady Suffolk's removal from court wou'd affect you in the Manner you tell me it dos: Your Friend M^rs Herbert, where I dined the day before yesterday, was speaking of the thing with concern and was sure it wou'd touch you, as much as any Body: your Greifs are so much mine that it wou'd be needless to tell you I am sorry for your Loss; I foresee a very disagreeable consequence to you from this change, which is, that your Friendship with Her may be charg'd upon you as a crime, and what was before a support may now be a prejudice to you. Harriot's complaint is far from giving me any uneasiness, I think nothing but such a necessity wou'd have made Them do what they indisputably ought to do. my concern for Her is, that her situation is so bad as to render this circumstance, (distresfull as it is) necessary to put her into a better. Poor Girl, what unnatural cruelty and Insolence she has to suffer from A Person[1] that shou'd be her support and comfort in this distress: I have heard him say so many hard Things upon this affair, that I think I do him no injustice to say he will be more inexorable than the Knight.[2] I suppose Lyttelton is return'd from Stowe and has found a letter from me Laying for him at the Admiralty. If he's not come back I am afraid he's ill this Pinching weather. I continue well, as I was when I wrote to you last. Adieu Dear Nanny,

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[1] Doubtless his brother.

Y^rs^ most affec^ly^
WM. PITT.[3]

The letter that follows is important, as it marks an epoch in Pitt's life: for he was now at Stowe, where he was to make a long stay, and enrol himself in Cobham's band of connections. He had just entered Parliament[4] and now commences a politician. But, happily for us, he has not yet assumed his political dialect.

*Stowe. July y^e^* 2: 1735:

Dear Nanny,—I am mighty glad to hear you escaped the headach after so fatiguing a journey, but I desire that may not prevent your applying to a Physician: I am extremely pleas'd with the account you give me of the Person[5] you saw, it is a great step to be able to seem easy: I wish his mind may ever be as easy, as I have the pleasure of hearing his affairs are at present. the other Part of your

[1] His brother.

[2] Sir William Corbett.

[3] 'To The Hon^ble^ M^rs^ Ann Pitt at St. James's London.'

[4] Elected Feb. 18, 1735.

[5] Doubtless his brother.

letter astonishes me: I think he'l not succeed, tho' I assure you he has my good wishes, for I am persuaded nothing less will ever extricate him. The turn indeed is very sudden, but since he has taken it, he'l disgrace himself less by obtaining, than losing. My L^d Cobham wou'd have been very glad to see you and wish'd I had brought you, I am sorry you lost so good an opportunity of seeing Stowe. Adieu

most aff^{ly} y^{rs}
WM. PITT.

I have had other business to write to my Brother upon, which has hinder'd my speaking of the Orange trees. I'l make Ayscough do it.

I hope you found Lady Suffolk well.

The next letter is burthened with mysterious and anonymous allusions, as to which conjecture is futile.

Stowe July y^e 20: 1735.

Dear Nanny,—I am mighty glad you are so well satisfy'd with the match you give me an account of: I was not surpris'd to hear it, for I fancy'd I saw it long ago. I have all sort of reasons to wish Her happy, but to mention no other, She loves you in the manner I am apt to think one shou'd love you. the Person[1] you think pretty easy, is far from it: he endeavours to acquiesce under Pain, to bring his mind, if possible, to such a state of composure as to go through the duties of Life like an honest and Reasonable Man. our Friends[2] Repulse is the most scandalous and ignominious of all things. I want to hear a little of his noble designs for next year: Despair must produce something Extraordinary in so great a mind. I am seriously ashamed of him, and if he was to ask my advice what he should do, I think I cou'd only beg him to do nothing: that Man's whole life is a sort of consolation to me in my poor little circumstances. He gives me occasion to reflect too often, that I wou'd not act his Part one month for twice his estate. but I leave him to talk to you of yourself: I don't hear what Broxom says of your headach's: if you have not consulted him you have used me very ill: Pray send for him and let me know if you are better. Adieu.

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[1] Lyttelton—a mere guess.

[2] Doubtless his brother.

most affectionately Y^{rs}
Wm. Pitt.

Pope and Martha Blount were now at Stowe, so was Lady Suffolk; and William was polishing himself in the best company.

Stow Sept. y^{e} 2: 1735.

Don't say a word more of my never writing, but confess immediately that you admire my way of writing more than any Body's, that is my way of sending you Postcripts Every Day: I have nothing to say of Letters, but M^{r} Pope[1] says somewhere, 'Heaven first taught Postscripts for the wretches aid,' etc: you must know I han't a word to say to you; for I write only to introduce the Postscript, as M^{r} Bays wou'd make a Poem to bring in a fine thought, that was none of his own; I therefore finish to leave more room for my Lady Suffolk. adieu.

[In another hand, evidently Lady Suffolk's] how often my Dear Child have I wish'd you here? I know you wou'd like it, and I know two who thinks (*sic*) even Stowe wou'd be still more agreeable they talk of you I believe both Love you; but one can pun, and talk nonsense wth M^{rs} Blount most Elegantly remember Saturday and never forget me, that is, do not be ungratefull

We see in the next letter that Pitt was not merely supping with the wits, but playing at cricket, with Pope perhaps as umpire.

Stow Sept^{r} y^{e} 14: 1735.

I am very well pleas'd with the conversation you Had lately, and that you met with nothing in it that at all corresponds with the Subject of my former letter: I shall now be at ease, and give myself no more trouble in thinking and conjecturing about it. I am glad my Lady Suffolk got so well to Town; if she's not the worse for her journey, I fancy you are not much so for her return. if she did not happen to be the most amiable Estimable Person one has seen, I shou'd still love her For the admirable Talent she has of Distinguishing and Describing merit, in which she do's not yeild to the Noble L^{d} of our acquaintance. if she has done me justice, She has Told you I was very stupid and play'd very well at Cricket. I obey'd her orders to my L^{d} and Lady Cobham; my L^{ds} reflection was, He wish'd he cou'd take such a journey and do after it just what she did. when you see Lyttelton, tell him M^{r} Pope has been writing a letter to him ever since he has been here, but head-ach and Laziness has delay'd it, so that I believe He may be time enough at London to bring the letter to him himself, as he talks of setting out in a few days. Ayscough has been here, and desires Lyttelton will mention him to the Speaker for preaching before the House the next 30th of January sermon. I'l leave off for fear I shou'd think of half a dozen messages more.

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[1] N.B.—Pope was at Stowe during this month. See Lady Suffolk's Letters, ii. 143.

I am most affec^{ly} Y^{rs}

W. Pitt.

direct to me at Stow I am more here than at Touster [? Towcester]. You must say 'member of Parl^{t}' They make me pay always else.

The next two letters deal with some dark transaction relating to wine, probably smuggled, from Guernsey.

Stow Sept. y^{e} 16: 1735.

I am very sorry I can't answer all your Questions this Post, but to begin with that I can answer the Frame Maker's Name is Bellamy, he lives in Rupert Street: as to the Guernsey wine, it is a commission of so secret a Nature, and must be treated with such art and circumspection, (according to the instructions I am honour'd with) That I must desire further time to get the lights necessary to the full discovery of so dark an affair. I have been able to penetrate no farther than that my L^{d} Cobham and his Butler are the only Persons at the bottom of the secret, The one I can't ask he being abroad; the other I must not, being ty'd up by my orders: there remains therefore nothing To be done, but to wait the return of the Butler, or larger Power to treat with my L^{d} in Person. but to talk no longer like a Minister, but an humble Servant of my lady Suffolk's, I desire my compliments to Her, and I'l be sure to send an answer about the wine next Post. I please myself with thinking you are free from Head-ach, both as they are very bad things; and because they are y^{e} effect with you of other uneasiness: be well and happy, is the only advice you want; and the only means by which I can be so:

I am most affec^{ly} y^{rs}
W. Pitt.

Stowe. Sept. y^{e} 19: 1735.

If you happen to write to me once in a week or fortnight I am never to hear the last of it; but pray admire the exact diligence of my correspondence: I don't only answer your letter the first Post, but I continue answering It two or three Posts successively: I am now only at the second, and you shall see you are not above half answer'd yet: but to tell you all I can, the Man M^{r} Hardy, who sells my L^{d} Cobham the Wine in Question, is now in Guernsey; the Buttler will write to his correspondent to know when he is like to return, which he supposes must be soon—all which my Lady Suffolk shall be informed of: I expect a clear distinct answer from you to each letter of the volumes I have lately writ to you. Adieu.

The following letter alludes in all probability to his brother, and also to that Richard Grenville who was afterwards so notorious as Lord Temple. It seems strange when one recalls Temple in maturity to read of him as Dick, with a careless countenance and jolly laugh. But everybody has been young.

Stowe. Sept. yᵉ 28: 1735.

I don't understand this way of answering two letters in form, avec un Trait de Plume; I expected you shou'd have told me you had nothing to tell me in more words, or at least at two different times: this sort of Correspondence, where one must not talk, seems rather a sort of visit to shew yourself: I hope you won't be in such a hurry next time; that I shall see you a little longer, or I shall call it only leaving your name. after all this, I am not really angry at the shortness of your last letter; you gave a reason that satisfied me entirely. I hope our friend is well; I had the Pleasure of hearing he seem'd in very good Spirits, when Dick Greenville (*sic*) saw him; I hope really was so. I suppose You have seen Dick's careless countenance at Kensington, and that you begin to be acquainted with his Laugh. I am called to breakfast, so goodby

Yʳˢ most affectionately
W. Pitt.

October finds William still at Stowe, and not likely to leave, but he sends this anxious and tender note to Ann.

Stowe. October yᵉ 5: 1735.

My Dear,—I long to be with you to know what the particular circumstance is that gives you uneasiness: or is it only the Thing in general? whatever it be, take all the comfort you can in knowing you act humanely and honourably. it won't be in my Power to see you till December, and the latter End of it. I am very much at Stowe, and pass my time as agreeably as I can do at a distance from you at a time you say you want to talk to me: I hope by your next letter to hear you have talk'd to yourself upon the Subject of your uneasiness and don't want my advice: Adieu,

I am with all affection yʳˢ
W. Pitt.[1]

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[1] 'To the Honᵇˡᵉ Mʳˢ Pitt at Kensington House Middlesex. Free—W. Pitt.'

The next note deals again with the affair which is causing Ann uneasiness, but without giving us any clue to it. One cannot however refrain from the surmise that Ann's temper and tongue had now begun to get her into trouble.

Stowe. *Octob*^{r} *y*^{e} 12: 1735.

My dear Child,—I can't by letter enter into particulars relating to The affair you mention, nor were I with you, cou'd I give you any other than a general advice, which is, as well as you can to make yourself and others easy: I know this is saying almost nothing, and that is the very thing I think you have only to do: I beg you will be at Quiet as to what you have hitherto done, believe me it is not only irreproachable, but must do you great honour with whoever know your conduct. I will say one word more, which is this, that you shou'd take care not to be misunderstood, at least in any great degree. This is all I can say to you, who have the warmest concern for your happiness and am with more affection than I can tell you,

Y^{rs} W. Pitt.

There is now an unexplained interval of two years. Some letters have perhaps been lost or destroyed, one has apparently miscarried; or, still more probably, the brother and sister have been together. But the next letter is still dated from Stowe, where William was evidently established on the most familiar footing.

Stow. *Nov*^{r} *y*^{e} 6: 1737.

You are even with me for all the want of readiness in writing, ever since I began to correspond: I wou'd tell you how many weeks it is, since I wrote to you my last unanswer'd letter, if my memory was strong enough to carry so remote a period of Chronology in my head: I have sometimes told you I have been ashamed of not writing: I take this occasion to retract all Declarations of that sort, and tell you I never was, nor ever will be ashamed of want of regularity in corresponding, after this last silence of yours: I am aware that you must throw the blame upon y^{e} Post, and say you never received the letter in question, and indeed the Doctor has given me an intimation, y^{t} the thing was to take y^{t} turn, without which you wou'd not have been troubled even with these reproaches. the Letter had nothing in it, and yet I had rather you had receiv'd it, if you are in earnest that you did not. I intend to be in Town the beginning of December: I shall see Mrs. Nedham at Bampton before I come:

Y^{rs} W. PITT.

I desire you will write immediately to let me know you have no return of y^{e} disorder you had just before you left Hampton court.

In the next he refers to Lord Cornbury, a friend, a Tory, and something of a Jacobite. He was a great admirer of Pitt, and had indeed written an ode to him.

Stow. Nov^{r} y^{e} 12: 1737.

I do not think myself obliged to thank you for your letter, it was a defence to an accusation, you was under a necessity of pleading and you did it with the confidence of an old offender, and even went so far as to recriminate upon y^{r} accuser: but let the act of oblivion cover all. however that I may thank you for something, I thank you for haveing hardly any remains of y^{r} cold. Pray keep keeping yourself well till December, in one week of which month I hope to see you. Adieu.

Y^{rs} Most affec^{ly}

W. PITT.

I wish you the Dutchess of Queensbury and Lady Cardigan with all my heart. How do's L^{d} Cornbury?

CHAPTER IV.

MORE than sixteen years elapse between this letter and the next, which takes us far beyond our present limit, but it is best to finish the story of Ann. Part of this long interval can be explained by extreme harmony, and the remainder by the reverse. The mutual devotion of William and Ann lasted, says Lord Camelford, till he became Paymaster in May 1746: then they quarrelled. Why, no one knows, or, it is to be presumed, will ever know. Horace Walpole only says that Pitt shook his sister off in an unbecoming manner. Camelford thinks that Pitt disliked Ann's friendship for Lady Bolingbroke, and thought that she was under the influence of Bolingbroke himself, 'that tawdry fellow, as Lord Cobham called him.'[1] Pitt, like most other people, except the rare spirits who loved the brilliant being, profoundly distrusted Bolingbroke, and may not have wished to see Bolingbroke influence assume a footing in his house. Perhaps then he remonstrated, perhaps Ann vindicated her friendship with heat. Between these two fiery natures words might be exchanged in a moment which years would not obliterate. Grattan told Rogers that 'Mrs. Ann Pitt, Lord Chatham's sister, was a very superior woman. She hated him, and they lived like cat and dog. He could only get rid of her by leaving his house and setting a bill on it, "This house to let."'[1] If these two Pitts quarrelled in the fierce Pitt fashion, it is not unlikely that some such expedient would be adopted. But it must be doubted whether they lived like cat and dog, else they would have parted long before. Grattan's statement was made in conversation with all the large outline and picturesque latitude that conversation allows, and he probably knew nothing about the matter. We can only surmise. Lord Camelford tells us that up to the time of the Paymastership (1746) William and Ann had lived together in one of the small houses in Pall Mall which look into St. James's Square, and that when he moved to his official residence at the Pay Office he moved alone. But, as a matter of fact, she had left him some time before, and gone to live with Lady Bolingbroke at Argeville. We have a letter from William to Lady Suffolk, dated July 6, 1742, in which he favours the plan of Ann's living with Lady Bolingbroke, so long as is convenient to her hostess, and then returning home. Moreover, Pitt himself in October of this year 1742 was not living in Pall Mall, but had moved to York Street, Burlington Buildings.[2] Ann had formed a mad project of living in Paris as a single woman, which William justly discountenanced. However, she proceeded to Argeville, where George Grenville found her in September. She may have returned to her brother, but she probably remained abroad, and her having been with the Bolingbrokes so long, even with William's sanction, may have made her less welcome to her brother on her return.

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[1] Camelford MS.

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[1] Recollections of Samuel Rogers, p. 104.

[2] Grenville Papers, i. 13.

In June 1751 she was appointed Keeper of the Privy Purse to the Princess of Wales, and superintendent of the education of the Princess Augusta, afterwards Duchess of Brunswick. She obtained this appointment, we are told, through the interest of Mr. Cresset, the confidential servant and Treasurer of the Princess of Wales, whose authority in the Court soon afterwards gave way to the ascendancy of Lord Bute; though Pitt imagined that here again he could trace the hand of Bolingbroke. 'However,' says Lord Camelford, 'thinking she could be useful to him in so important a post, he sought a reconciliation—he flattered, he menaced, he insulted, but was rejected.'

Of these proceedings two records remain in letters which have already been published, but cannot be omitted here, as they are instinct with passion and light. Whether they answer to Lord Camelford's description must be left to the judgment of those who read them. That they are powerful, tender, and unaffected all must allow. They also contain quotations from the quarrels which are not devoid of interest. Ann had declared that William expected absolute deference and a blind submission to his will; and that he had in several conversations directly explained to her that, to satisfy him, she must live with him as his slave. On this point William admits that he did expect some measure of deference to his views, and that, living together, he thought she might shape her life in some degree to his. This seems to have been the real ground of separation. William wished to be master in his own house. Ann could brook no control. Perhaps the brother may have asked the sister to discontinue or relax her intimacy with the Bolingbrokes, as injurious and inconvenient to him, and

Ann, we may guess, would curtly bid him mind his own business. But these are only probabilities.

In the course of these proceedings we learn that William lost his temper, declaring that she had a bad head and a worse heart; for this he humbly begs her pardon.

Another complaint of Ann's is easily explained. She says that William had been talking of the 200*l.* a year that he allowed her. William's answer makes it perfectly clear that he had been reproached with the fact of his sister's destitute condition, and that he had had to explain, in his own defence, that he gave her this income.

Whether Pitt wished for a reconciliation because his sister had become Privy Purse to the Princess of Wales must be judged by the light of his character. It seems more probable that it was because she had returned from abroad, and that he would now meet her constantly in society. In any case, here are the letters. Whatever Pitt's motives may have been, it is clear that Ann, had she not been a vixen, would have gladly accepted the olive-branch offered by her brother, who, still unmarried, wished to be restored to the companionship which had been the joy of his life, 'that friendship which was my very existence for so many years,' 'a harmony between brother and sister unexampled almost all that time.'

(A)

June 19, 1751. *Wednesday morning.*

Dear Sister!—As you had been so good to tell me in your note of Monday that you would write to me again soon *in a manner capable, you hoped, of effacing every impression of any thing painfull that may have passed from* *me to you*, I did not expect such a letter as I found late last night, and which I have now before me to answer: without any compliment to you, I find myself in point of writing unequal enough to the task; nor have I the slightest desire to sharpen my pen. I have well weighed your letter, and deeply examined your picture of me, for some years past; and indeed, Sister, I still find something within, that firmly assures me I am not that thing which your interpretations of my life (if I can ever be brought to think them all your own) would represent me to be. I have infirmities of temper, blemishes, and faults, if you please, of nature, without end; but the Eye that can't be deceived must judge between us, whether that friendship, which was my very existence for so many years, could ever have received the least flaw, but from umbrages and causes which the quickest sensibility and tenderest jealousy of friendship alone, at first, suggested. It is needless to mark the unhappy epoque, so fatal to a harmony between sister and brother unexampled almost all that time, the loss of which has embitter'd much of my life and will always be an affliction to me. But I will avoid running into vain retrospects and unseasonable effusions of heart, in order to hasten to some particular points of your letter, upon which it is necessary for me to trouble you with a few words. *Absolute* deference and *blind submission to my will*, you tell me I have often declared to you in the strongest and most mortifying terms cou'd alone satisfy me. I must here beseech you cooly to reconsider these precise terms, with their epithets; and I will venture to make the appeal to the sacred testimony of your breast, whether there be not exaggeration in them. I have often, too often reproached you, and from warmth of temper, in strong and plain terms, that I found no longer the same consent of minds and agreement of sentiments: and I have certainly declared to you that I cou'd not be satisfy'd with you, and I could no longer find in you *any degree of deference towards me.* I was never so drunk with presumption as to expect *absolute* deference and *blind submission to my will.* A degree of deference to me and to my situation, I frankly own, I did not think too much for me to expect from you, with all the high opinion I really have of your parts. What I expected was too much (as perhaps might be). In our former days friendship had led me into the error. That error is at an end, and you may rest assured, that I can never be so unreasonable as to expect from you, now, anything like deference to me or my opinions. I come next to the small pecuniary assistance which you accepted from me, and which was exactly as you state it, two hundred pounds a year. I declare, upon my honour, I never gave the least foundation for those exaggerations which you say have been spread concerning it. I also declare as solemnly, before God and man, that no consideration cou'd ever have extorted from my lips the least mention of the trifling assistance you accepted from me, but the cruel reports, industriously propagated, and circulating from various quarters round to me, of the state you was left to live in. As to the repayment of this wretched money, allow me, dear Sister, to entreat you to think no more of it. The bare thought of it may surely suffice for your own dignity and for my humiliation, without taxing your present income, merely to mortify me: the demonstration of a blow is, in honour, a blow, and let me conjure you to rest it here. When I want and you abound, I promise you to afford you a better and abler triumph over me, by asking the assistance of your purse. I will now trouble you no farther than to repeat my sincere wishes for your welfare and to rejoice that you have so ample matter for the best of happiness, *springing from a heart and mind* (to use your own words) entirely devoted to gratitude and duty.

(B)

June 20, 1751. *Pay Office.*

'Dear Sister!—I am this moment returned out of the Country and find another letter from you. I am extremely sorry that any expressions in mine to you should make you think it necessary for you to trouble yourself to write again, that you might convey upon paper to me, what you would avoid saying in conversation, as disagreeable and painfull. I believe I may venture to refer you to the whole tenor of my letter to convince yourself that I had no desire to irritate; and I assure you very sincerely that the expression, which seems to have had some of that effect, did not in the least flow from a thought that you was capable of intending to represent falsely. I only took the liberty to put it to your candid recollection, whether the very cause you mention, *strong feelings* and emotions of mind attending them, with regard to conversations of a disagreeable kind, might not have led to some exaggerations of them to your own self. I verily believe this cause, and this alone may have had some of this effect: for sure I am, that I never could wish, much less exact that the object of my whole heart and of my highest opinion and confidence, thro the best part of my days, could be capable of such vileness as *absolute* deference and *blind submission to my will.* All I wished and what I but late quite despaired of, I took the liberty to recall to you in my last letter. As to the late conversation you have thought necessary (since your letter of yesterday) to recollect, I am ready to take shame before you, and all mankind, if you please, for having lost my temper, upon any provocation, so far as to use expressions, as foolish as they are angry: that you *had a bad head* will easily pass for the first: and a worse heart for the last. This you made me angry enough to say: but this I never was, nor I hope shall be, angry enough to think: and this, Sister, I am sure you know. As to the other word, which I am sorry I used because it offended you, I will again beg to appeal to your recollection, whether it was not apply'd to your forbidding *me ever to talk to you of every thing that interested you:* and as *to shaping your life in some degree to mine,* which I believe were my very words, let me ask you, if you don't know that they were said in an answer to your telling me *that I had in several conversations directly explained to you that to satisfy me you must live with me as my slave?* So much, dear Sister, for the several points of your letter; which I am sorry to find it necessary to say so many words upon. I will be with you by nine to-morrow, as that hour seems most convenient to you: is it impossible I may

> still find you so obliging as not to think any more of repaying what I certainly never lent you, in any other sense than that of giving me a right to your purse, whenever I should want it, and which you must forego some convenience to repay?[1]

Whether a reconciliation took place on this occasion or not we have no evidence apart from Camelford's. But if he is to be believed as to William's motives, there was little to be gained by one, for Ann was soon to leave the Court. Her new office 'very soon grew uneasy to her,' says her nephew, 'through the artifices of her royal pupil.' Horace Walpole gives a different account. 'Being of an intriguing and most ambitious nature, she soon destroyed her own prospect by an impetuosity to govern her mistress and by embarking in other cabals at that Court. Her disgrace followed, but without dismissal, on which she had retired to France.'[2]

'It was then,' says Camelford, 'that her brother, then Secretary of State, made a new overture of reconciliation by a letter that you will read, which had too much the appearance of sincerity and disinterestedness not to be gladly accepted.'

Camelford is not particularly careful of his own accuracy or consistency. He had just told us that William sought for a renewal of friendship because Ann would be useful to him at Court: he now has to acknowledge that when Ann was banished from Court he instantly sought reconciliation with more ardour than ever. As regards his accuracy, it need only be noted that the letter to which he alludes is dated from the Pay Office, and despatched more than three years before Pitt became Secretary; a flaw, but not a grave flaw, in a father writing from memory to his son.

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[1] Chatham MSS.

[2] Orford, i. 85.

Here is the letter, which seems to be in answer to one from Ann, and which is surely as tender and affectionate as the sorest heart of sister could desire:

Pay Office. Feb. 8. 1753.

Dear Sister,—I shou'd have receiv'd the most sensible satisfaction, if you had been able to tell me, that the more declared, or new symptoms of your disorder had been such, as gave you a near prospect of being quite relieved. believe me Dear Sister, my heart is fill'd with the most affectionate wishes for your health, and impatient desire to see you return home well and happy. I never can reflect on things passed, (wherein I must have been infinitely in the wrong, if I ever gave you a pain) without the tenderest sorrow: and the highest aggravation of this concern wou'd be to think, that, perhaps, you may not understand the true state of my heart towards you. Heaven preserve my Dear Sister, and may I ever be able to convince her how sincerely I am her most affectionate Brother:

W. Pitt.

I continue an Invalid, and wait for better weather with as much patience as I can.

This is followed by another letter so humble and so self-reproachful that one can scarcely believe it to be penned by one whose pride was a byeword, and one can certainly not believe it to be the production of crafty and servile selfishness, as Lord Camelford would have us imagine. No brother could approach a sister with more delicacy or warmth of feeling.

Pay Office. Feb. 27. 1753.

Dear Sister,—I am unable to express the load you have taken off my heart by your affectionate and generous answer to my last letter: I will recur no more to a subject, which your goodness and forgiveness forbid me to mention. the concern I feel for your state of health is most sensible; wou'd to God, you may be shortly in a situation to give me the infinite comfort of hearing of an amendment in it! I hope Spring is forwarder, where you reside, than with us, and that the difference of climate begins to be felt. I will not give you the trouble to read any more: but must repeat, in the fulness of my heart, the warmest and tenderest acknowledgements of your goodness to,

My Dear Sister, Your most affec Brother
W. Pitt.

I continue still a good deal out of Order, but begin to get ground.

The next letter marks a complete removal of tension and the restoration of close and friendly relations. It cannot, alas! restore the easy flow of youth. A score of years have passed, William has been buffeted and tossed and has had to fight hard for his hand; he is besides so much the older. So we find ourselves involved in the fulsome extravagance of his maturer epistles; so much the worse!

London. April y^e 5. 1753.

My Dear Sister,—Nothing can be felt more sensibly than I do the goodness of your letter, in which you talk to me circumstantially of your own health, and desire to hear circumstantially of mine. it is a great deal of Comfort to me to know that you have great hopes of being better by M^r Vernage's advice; but it wou'd have been an infinite satisfaction to have heard that you had already found amendment. May every Day of Spring contribute to the thing in the world I wish the most ardently! I am infinitely glad that the concurrent opinions of Physicians of both Countries are the foundation of expecting the Spa will relieve you: I shall dwell all I can on this comfortable hope, and beg to hear of any amendment you may find by better weather and whatever course you now use. I will now talk of that health you so kindly desire to hear of. I have been ill all the winter with disorders in my bowels, which have left me very low, and reduced me to a weak state of health. I am now, in many respects, better, and seem getting ground, by riding and taking better nourishment. Warmer weather, I am to hope, will be of much service to me. I propose using some mineral waters: Tunbridge or Sunning Hill or Bath, at their proper seasons. as the main of my complaint is much abated and almost removed, I hope my Horse, warm weather and proper nourishment will give me health again. the kind concern you take in it is infinitely felt by, Dear Sister,

Your most affectionate Brother
W. Pitt.

The next letter shows that Ann was residing at Blois.

Dear Sister,—I have just receiv'd the pleasure of your letter of 30 April. the Comfort it has given me is infinitely great, and your goodness in sending me the earliest account in your power of such an amendment as you now describe is the kindest thing imaginable, May the fine season, where you are, continue without interruption, and every Day of it add to the beneficial effects you have begun to feel! our season here does not keep pace with that at Blois: I am however much mended in several respects, and have the greatest hopes given me of removing my remaining disorder by the help of warmer weather and Tunbridge waters. I have just time to write this line before dinner, and had I more, I think it best not to trouble you with long letters. I shall dine upon your letter I am dear Sister

Your most affectionate Brother
London. May 7th 1753. W. Pitt.

Here intervenes a letter to Mary, in which there is cordial mention of Ann, and an obvious allusion to the escapades of Elizabeth; surely a tender letter from a brother of forty-five to a younger sister.

Bath. *Oct^r the* 20*^th^*. 1753.

I am very glad to hear in the Conclusion of my Dear Mary's letter that she will be under no difficulty in getting to London: my Brother is very obliging, as I dare say he intends to be in all things towards you, to make your journey easy and agreeable to you. I propose being in Town by the meeting of the Parliament; if I am able: when I shall have infinite Joy in meeting my Dear Sister after so very long an Absence and seeing Her in a Place where she seems to think herself not unhappy. if I shou'd be prevented being in Town so soon, the House will always be ready to receive you. I think you judge very right not to produce yourself much till we have met: M^rs^ Stuart, and my Sister Nedham, if in Town, will be the properest, as well as the most agreeable Places for you to frequent. My Dear Child, I need not intimate to your good understanding and right Intentions, what a high degree of Prudence and exact attention to your Conduct and whole behaviour is render'd necessary by the sad errors of others. It is an infinite misfortune to you that my Sister Ann is not in England: her Countenance and her Advice and Instructions, superior to any you can otherwise receive, wou'd be the highest advantage to you. Supply it as well as you can, by thinking of Her, imitating her worth, and thereby endeavouring to deserve her esteem, as you wish to obtain that of the best Part of the World. I can not express how anxious I am for your right behaviour in all respects, upon which alone your happiness must depend. whatever assistance my advice can be to You, you will ever have with the truest affection of a Brother.

Y^rs^ W. PITT.

The next letter is pregnant enough, written to Ann at Nevers. Their aunt Essex is dead, but her death only lurks in a postscript. For Pelham is dead and Pitt is a cripple at Bath, disabled from proceeding to the capital, where his fate and that of the future administration are being settled. His restless anguish seems to pierce through these few lines. And yet this bedridden invalid was to be a joyful and alert bridegroom before the year was out.

Bath. March 9*th*: 1754.

Dear Sister,—I write to you under the greatest affliction, on all Considerations Private and Publick. Mr Pelham Died Wednesday morning, of a Feaver and St. Anthony's fire. This Loss is, in my notion of things, irreparable to the Publick. I am still suffering much Pain with Gout in both feet, and utterly unable To be carry'd to London. I may hope to be the better for it hereafter, but I am at present rather worn down than releiv'd by it: I am extremely concern'd at the last accounts of your health. I hope you have Spring begun at Nevers, which I pray God may relieve you.

I am Dear Sister, Your most affectionate Brother,

W. Pitt.

My Sister Nedham has been ill of a Feaver here, but is well again.

I have just received an account of Mrs Cholmondeley's[1] Death.

The next letter, a month later, leaves Pitt still at Bath; the gout had almost the lion's share of his life, and we wonder that he accomplished so much under its constant pangs. On this occasion he strains our credulity by the complimentary assertion that he thinks a thousand times more of Ann than of the struggle over Pelham's succession, and his own involved ambition. On all that sordid scramble he kept the fierce, unflinching eye of a hawk, and of a hawk fastened by the talon. Ten days before he wrote this note he had despatched a letter to Newcastle, Pelham's brother and successor, burning with a passion which Ann's ailments could never have inspired. Ann indeed, knowing her William, would smile as she read, and value the extravagance at its worth.

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[1] His aunt.

Bath. *April* 4*th.* 1754.

Dear Sister,—The Account you give me of your own health, and the kind concern you feel for mine, touches me more than I will attempt to express, tho' I am still at Bath, don't think the worse of my health, but be assured that I am in a fairer way of recovering a tolerable degree of it, than I have been in for a long time pass't. My Gout has been most regular and severe, as well as of a proper Continuance to relieve, and perhaps quite remove, the general disorder which had brought me so low. I am recovering my feet and drinking the waters with more apparent good effects than I ever experienced from them. I have been out of all the bustle of the present Conjuncture; and believe me, my thoughts go a thousand times to Nevers, for once that they go towards London. Nothing in this world can, in the smallest degree, interest my mind like the recovery of your health. I wait with very painfull Impatience for better weather for you, and to hear, that the waters you propose to take, afford you relief.

I am My Dear Sister's ever most affectionate Brother

W. Pitt.

My sister Nedham is well, and went yesterday to Marybone to see her Sons.

Poor George Stanhope died of a feaver a few days since.[1]

The next, after an interval of six months, is again from Bath, but in a different strain. He is now the happiest of men, about to be united to the most meritorious and amiable of women, whose brothers are already his own in harmony and affection; a happy marriage, but a disastrous, storm-tossed brotherhood, as it was destined to be in the years to come, when rival ambitions would strain the bond to breaking.

There is also an icicle from Lady Hester herself, which embodies the decorous expression of what a young lady of the middle eighteenth century allowed herself to feel when she was going to be married. Even this act of politeness was inspired by William. 'I have writ this night to my poor sister Ann. She is not well enough to return to England this winter. Whenever your excessive goodness will honour her with a letter it will be a comfort to her. If you please to commit it to me I will forward it to her, and bless you a million of times.'[1]

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[1] Their cousin, Colonel the Hon. George Stanhope, who distinguished himself at Falkirk and Culloden.

Bath. Oct. 21st. 1754.

Dear Sister,—The favour of your letter from Chaillot has by no means answered my eager wishes for your health, and a kind of distant hope I had formed of your return to England this winter. My desires to see you are greatly and very painfully disappointed: I have only to hope that your Stay in France will give you a much better winter than the last, and may finally restore your health to you and you to your Friends. I am now, Dear Sister, to impart to you what I have no longer a prospect of doing, with infinitely more pleasure, by word of mouth: it is to say, that, your health excepted, I have nothing to wish for my happiness, Lady Hester Grenville has consented to give herself to me, and by giving me every thing my Heart can wish, she gives you a Sister, I am sure you will find so, not less every other way than in name. the act I now communicate, will best speak her character, she has generosity and goodness enough to join part of her best days to a very shattered part of mine; neither has my fortune any thing more tempting. I know no Motif she can have but wishing to replace to me many things that I have not. I can only add, that I have the honour and satisfaction of receiving the most meritorious and amiable of Women from the hands of a Family already my Brothers in harmony and affection, and who have been kindly Contending which of them shou'd most promote my happiness by throwing away the Establishment of a Sister they esteem and love so much. When I left Lady Hester ten days ago, She wish'd to know when I notify'd this approaching event to you, that She might do herself the pleasure to write to you. when she knows I have writ, she will introduce herself to you. I propose staying here about ten days, if my patience can hold out so long. You will wonder to see a letter on such a subject dated from Bath; but to a goodness like Lady Hester Grenville's, perhaps, my infirmities and my Poverty are my best titles.

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[1] Letter dated Oct. 21, 1754, in the Chatham MSS.

Your ever affectionate Brother

W. Pitt.

Lady Hester Grenville to Miss Ann Pitt.

May I not hope, D^{r} Madam, that the situation I am in with your Brother will dispose you to receive favourably an Instance of the extreme desire I have to recommend myself to your friendship; and that You will give me Leave to employ the only means in my Power from the distance that is between us, of expressing how much I wish to enjoy that Honour. Every Thing makes me Ambitious of Obtaining so great an Advantage, and so flattering a distinction. Your Own peculiar Merit, and the Large share which you possess of M^{r} Pitt's Esteem and Affection makes me feel it as an Article important to my Happiness, and I indulge myself in the pleasure of thinking that you will not refuse to extend your goodness to a Person whom your Brother has thought worthy of so convincing a proof of his regard and Love, and whose sentiments for Him are full of all that the highest sense of his superior Merit and most amiable qualities can Inspire. I feel a vanity and a pleasure in being the Object of his Choice which can be added to by nothing but the happiness of knowing that you give your Approbation and that you will allow me to flatter myself You will not be sorry for an Event which will give me the valued privilege of addressing you the next time, I have the honour to be thus employ'd, by the endearing name of Sister. Give me leave to say that I have heard with the greatest regret that your state of health does not permit you to return to England this winter, and that I hope as a compensation for the Disappointment your stay will ensure y^{r} perfect recovery. I commit this Letter to Y^{r} B^{rs} Care, and trust to Him for conveying it to you, sure that the best recommendation it can have will be its coming under his protection; accompanied with Marks of His Partiality; and I hope that you will believe D^{r} Madam, that I am with all the esteem possible, and the highest regard,

Your most faithful and Obed. Humble Servant,

Her: Grenville.

In the next letters Pitt and Lady Hester acknowledge Ann's congratulations. He had, however, moved to London, and amid all these orange-blossoms was forging terrible vengeance on his perfidious chief. Within ten days of his marriage he was making Newcastle and Newcastle's henchmen cower in their offices, though for the present they did not dare oust him from his.

Pay Office. Nov. 8th. 1754.

Dear Sister,—Your letter of the 1st Nov^{r} has given me all that remain'd to Compleat my happiness, by the affectionate Share you take in it; and without which, great as it truly is, and shar'd in the kindest manner by every Thing else I value and love in the World, it still wou'd have wanted something ever essential to my Satisfaction. Your Goodness and Friendship has nothing left to give me: Cou'd the re-establishment of your health but add that most sensible Pleasure to all I feel, I may call myself happy, as it is given but to a few to be. Lady Hester Grenville speaks for herself this Post. my Health is not good, but, as yet, it is not quite bad. I have gone on with the World (as I cou'd) with much worse.

I am Dear Sister Your most affectionate Brother

W. Pitt.

I hope in about a week to say more of my happiness.

Lady Hester's letter is not worth giving; it is prim, decorous, and void.

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Pitt and Lady Hester are married on November 16. Lady Hester writes to Ann nine days afterwards a letter full of good feeling stiffened and starched by decorum. Some letters are too improper to print, this is too proper.

Ann was now returning home, and Mary goes to meet her with a note of welcome from William. Lord Camelford says that her health and spirits declined grievously in France, and so her brother, 'though not till after repeated notifications of her distress, sent over a clergyman to bring her back to her family and assist in her journey.' This gives us a test of Camelford's bias in dealing with his uncle. For hear Ann herself, in a letter to Lady Suffolk announcing that she was on her way to England, and had arrived as far as Sens, whence she writes. Speaking of William, she says, 'he continued as he began, as soon as the King had put him in the place he is in, by giving me the strongest and tenderest proof of his affection. . . . I was so sunk and my mind so overcome with all I have suffered, and I was so mortified and distressed, that I do not believe anything in the world could have made it possible for me to get out of this country, but my brother's sending a friend to my assistance, and choosing so proper a person as M^{r} de la Porte is in all respects. He has known me and my family for about thirty years, from having been my Lord Stanhope's Governor.' She goes on to refer to 'the virtue and goodness of my friends, particularly of my brother, who has always seemed to guess and understand all I felt of every kind, and has carried his delicacy so far as never once to put me in mind of what I felt more strongly than any other part of my misfortune, which was, how very disagreeable and embarrassing it must be to him to have me in France, You may believe that I will be out of it the first minute that is possible.'

So the fact is that the man, whom Camelford endeavours to depict as having acted with hardness and insensibility on this occasion, displayed in reality incessant and delicate tenderness, according to the grateful acknowledgment of Ann herself. Pitt had just attained his supremacy; this was the most critical epoch of his life; all the year he had been fighting the King and the Court, and this was the moment of victory. Eleven days before Ann wrote this letter he had become for the second time Secretary of State and had begun his great ministry. During this time of strain and anxiety he heard of Ann's illness; he must have felt strongly, though he refrained from mentioning it to her, the irksomeness of her being in France when he was waging war against that kingdom, and so he sent an old family friend to conduct her home. Could brother have done more? Is there not here an anxious and thoughtful affection, distorted grievously by the implacable animosity of the nephew? Camelford is, however, obliged to record that on her arrival she went straight to Pitt's villa at Hayes, 'where, tho' her spirits were still weak, she was surprisingly recovered.'

There is no date to the following note which Mary was to hand to Ann. But as Ann's letter to Lady Suffolk cited above is of July 10, 1757, we cannot be far wrong in placing it somewhat later in the same month. It is indeed perplexing to find another letter to Lady Suffolk dated 'Spa, September 5, 1757.' But the year 1757 is a surmise, and in all probability an incorrect surmise, of the editor. Ann was hastening to England in July 1757, stayed some time at Hayes on her arrival, and is not likely to have been on the Continent again in September.

Friday Morning.

Dear Sister,—I Can not let my Sister Mary go away without a line to express my infinite satisfaction to hear you are arrived and that you find your strength and Spirits in so good a condition. at the same time let a Veteran Invalide recommend to you, above all things, to use this returning Strength and Spirits very sparingly at first. I shou'd be happy to accompany Miss Mary to Rochester, but the overwhelming business of this Momentous Conjuncture hardly allow (*sic*) me time to tell you how impatiently and tenderly I wish to embrace my Dear Sister.[1]

Ann had gone from Hayes to Clifton, as we know from a letter to Lady Suffolk dated June 22, 1758, and thence proceeded to Bath, as we know from another letter dated August 19, 1758. She was restless, as on August 26 she was at Bristol. In all these letters there is not a word that betokens other than kindness and gratitude to her brother; as, for example, on August 19 she writes to Lady Suffolk: 'God grant that the public news may continue to be good, especially from Prince Ferdinand, for the sake of a person whose health and prosperity I wish more than I shall ever tell him.' A week afterwards she takes public occasion to rejoice at his triumphs by furnishing a bonfire and ten hogsheads of strong beer and all the music she could procure. On the other side, we read the letters which the busy statesman found time to write to her, breathing affection and solicitude.

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[1] 'To The Honourable Mrs. Ann Pitt. W. Pitt.'

St. James's Square. Aug. 10th. 1758.

Dear Sister,—I wait with much impatience to hear you are arrived well at Bath, and that you are lodged to your mind. I will not entertain any doubts, after having had the satisfaction of seeing you, that your progression to a perfect recovery will be sensible every Day, and as soon as you can bear a stronger nourishment, that Spirits, the concomitants of Strength, will return. as a part of the necessary regimen, solid nourishment for that busy craving Thing call'd Mind must have its place, and I know of no mental Alteratives (?) of power to renovate and brace up a sickly Constitution of Thought, but that mild and generous Philosophy which teaches us the true value of the World, and a rational firm religion, that anchors us safe in the confidence of another. but I will end my sermon and come to the affairs of the world I am so deeply immersed in. this day had brought us an account that our Troops effected their landing, with little Loss, y^{e} 7th and 8th two Leagues from Cherbourgh, in the face of a pretty considerable Number, who gave some loose fires and run. I am infinitely anxious till we hear again, as I expect something serious will ensue. I must not close my letter without telling you that the most particular enquiries after your health have been made by the Lady you sent a Card to, and I, very obligingly reprimanded for keeping your arrival a secret from Them. Lady Hester shares my Impatience to hear news of you, and all my sentiments for your health and happiness. our Love follows dear Mary, whose merits you must, to your great satisfaction, more and more feel every day.

I am ever my Sister's most affectionate Brother

W. Pitt.

St. James's Square. Sept. y^{e} 12th. 1758.

Dear Sister,—You have now try'd the Bristol waters long enough to make some judgement of their effects, and I have kept silence long enough for you to make perhaps a strange judgement of my manner of feeling for my friends. but feel I certainly do, my Dear Sister, for all that concerns your health and happiness, how much soever I have kept it for some weeks past a matter between me and my own conscience, without giving you the least hint of my truly affectionate sollicitude on your account. I am extremely inclin'd to believe Doctor Oliver judges rightly of the first principle of your disorders; that it is Gout, which aided by the waters of Bath and proper nourishment may ripen into a salutary tho' painfull crisis. as I think myself that Languor or perturbation of Spirits are well exchanged for a degree of pain, I shall heartily wish you joy of such a revolution in the system of your Constitution. how can I have got so far in my paper, and not a word of the King of Kings whose last Glories transcend all the parts? the Modesty of H:P: Maj^{tys} relation, his Silence of Himself, and entire attribution of the victory to Gen^{l} Seidlitz, are of a mind as truely heroick as H. Majesty's taking a Colours in his own hand, when exhortations failed, and forcing a disordered Infantery to follow Him or see Him perish. more Glory can not be won; but more decisive final consequence we still hope to hear, and languish for further letters from the Prussian army. My Love to Dear M^{rs} Mary.

I am ever most affec^{ly} Y^{rs}

W. Pitt.

Then comes a letter referring apparently to the Battle of Hochkirch:

Dear Sister,—I can not omit writing, tho' but a line, to give you the satisfaction of knowing that M^{r} d'Escart will return to France in a very few days. I am very glad that it has been practicable to accomplish so soon a thing that will give pleasure to so many of your Friends. the news from Dresden to day is not very agreable, the King of Prussia's right wing attack'd sudenly at 4 in the morning y^{e} 14th, put into disorder, Marshal Keith and Prince Francis of Brunswick kill'd but the King coming to the Right, the action was restored and the Austrians repulsed. His Prussian Majesty's Person so exposed that one trembles: his Horse shot, and a Page and Ecuyer wounded by his side. a second action seems inevitable: I hope every thing from it, as this Heroick Monarch's happy Genius never fails him when he wants it most. I have not a moment more. be assured of my constant wishes for your health and happiness.

I am Dear Sister Your affectionate Brother

W. Pitt.

Loves to Mary.
Oct. ye 24th.

Ann was now in London on a short visit, for the purpose of attending the Court; but she had designs of her own which appear to be serious, but which give some evidence of the insanity which was always hovering over her.

'I hear my Lord Bath,' she writes, November 10, 1758, 'is here very lively, but I have not seen him, which I am very sorry for, because I want to offer myself to him. I am quite in earnest, and have set my heart upon it; so I beg seriously you will carry it in your mind and think if you could find any way to help me. Do not you think Lady Betty (Germaine) and Lord and Lady Vere would be ready to help me, if they knew how willing I am? But I leave this to your discretion, and repeat seriously that I am quite in earnest. He can want nothing but a companion that would like his company, and in my situation, I should not desire to make the bargain without that circumstance. And though all I have been saying puts me in mind of some advertisements I have seen in the newspaper from gentlewomen in distress, I will not take that method; but I want to recollect whether you did not once tell me, as I think you did many years ago, that he spoke so well of me that he got anger for it at home, where I never was a favourite.'[1]

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[1] Lady Suffolk's Letters, ii. 251.

Never, surely, did a spinster of forty-eight breathe so frankly her aspirations towards a wealthy and avaricious septuagenarian. We may be sure that this freak of fancy was not confided to her brother. But he on his side had a favour to ask of her, on behalf of a puissant personage. Statesmen in those days had to pay their homage to the Court wherever they could find it, and Pitt, who was never loved by George II., could not afford to neglect the influence of Lady Yarmouth. At any rate, he did not, though apparently without success in his ultimate object; and so we find him attempting to neutralise, through Ann, the mischief which might ensue from Lady Betty Waldegrave's letters being attributed by the Court of France to the King's favourite. Lady Yarmouth was in danger of being compromised!

Ann thus describes the negotiation: 'If I had not happened to be sick, I should have been very much pleased with an express that was sent me to give me a commission that I liked to execute, because it relates to a person I am obliged to and have a regard for; it is my Lady Yarmouth who desires me, by my brother, to explain a very disagreeable mistake which has been made in France about a very fond letter, and mighty improper as to politics, which Lady Betty Waldegrave wrote to her husband, unsigned, and having desired the answer might be directed to Lady Y's lodging, they concluded, very absurdly, the letter came from her; and as it was intercepted, it was translated, shown, and commented very impertinently.'

St. James's Square. Nov. 7th. 1758.

Dear Sister,—I write to you at the desire of Lady Yarmouth, on an Incident of a particular nature, and which has given her Ladyship so much uneasiness that it will be a very agreeable office, if you can contribute, by a letter to some Lady of the Court at Versailles, to the clearing up of a very odd Qui pro Quo. The matter in question is as follows. Letters to England from our Army having been taken, there is amongst them *one* from Lady Betty Waldgrave to General Waldgrave *unsign'd.* the writer desires the General will *direct his letters to Lady Yarmouth at Kensington.* on this ground the letter in question being attributed, in France, to Lady Yarmouth has drawn attention, been translated, and handed about, as she is inform'd, with some mirth at Versailles and Paris. this letter is return'd, by the channel of Selwyn's House, and Lady Yarmouth finds it to contain, not only the expressions of a loving wife to a Husband, but a strain of political reflections, together with observations on very high Personages in Europe, commanding Armies in Germany; all which Language cou'd not but bear a very prejudicial Comment, if really attributed to the Lady, by whose desire I now write to you. You are the best judge how to acquit yourself of the Commission you are desired to charge yourself with; whether by writing to the Dutchess of Mirepoix or any other of your friends. I can only say, that I perceive Lady Yarmouth will think Herself obliged to you for such an intervention, in a matter of some Delicacy, and which might have many possible ill Consequences. if you shall write in the manner desir'd, and will send your letter directed to your Correspondent, under Cover to me, I will take care it shall go in Count Very's packet to Paris.

I rejoice extremely my Dear Sister, at the account of your amendment in Spirits, since your late attack. keep the ground so hardly won, and ascend, by courage and perseverance that arduous steep, on the Summit of which, Health and Happiness, I trust, still wait you. I am lame in one foot, and much threatened with Gout for some days past; but I flatter myself that it may blow over, like an Autumnal ruffle. our Expeditions are, I fear, lame in both Feet. My Messenger is order'd to wait your full leisure.

I am Dear Sister, Your most affectionate Brother

W. Pitt.

Ann appears to have been successful, and receives thanks both from William and the formal Lady Hester.

Dear Sister,—I am desired by Lady Yarmouth to assure you of the sense she has of your good offices, which she was so good to accompany with the most obliging expression of regard for you, and with many wishes for your health. I shall be happy to receive a favourable account of your situation, and which I flatter myself is every day mending, and that by a Progression which will soon enable you to take air and exercise. I am just going to Hayes, for some hours recess, that I want much.

I am ever Dear Sister Most aff^{ly} Y^{rs}

Saturday morning. W. Pitt.

St. James's Square Tuesday Nov. 14.

Dear Madam,—If I had not for some time past found great inconvenience from writing I shou'd not have continued so long Silent where I always find so much pleasure in expressing my sentiments, but however great my indisposition is from *my Situation* to my present employment, I cou'd not refuse a commission which I had the honour to be charged with today from my Lady Yarmouth, as I am sure the Subject of it will be a great pleasure and Satisfaction to you. It was to desire I wou'd return you a thousand Thanks for your letters, and to assure you that she felt herself most extremely obliged to you for them, and for the trouble you had given yourself, with many other expressions of the manner in which she was sensible of your goodness in what you had done, and how very agreable it was to Her. I was very sorry to find by your account of yourself to M^{r} Pitt that you had had another return of your bilious Complaint, but we Comfort our selves with the hope of its having produced the same salutary effects the Last did. We shall be impatient to have a confirmation of its having had so desirable a consequence. By Miss Mary's Last Letters both to her Brother and Me we have flattered ourselves with the pleasure of seeing Her for some days past, but as yet she has not appeared, which wou'd make us uneasy but that we conclude if her purpose of Leaving Bath the time she mention'd had been alter'd from any disagreable Circumstance she wou'd have apprised us of it. Our Nephew, Mr. Thos. Pitt, desires to have the permission and pleasure of conveying this to you, as he intends setting out for the Bath tomorrow in order to wait upon Sir Richard Lyttelton, whom I wish he may find better than by the reports which prevail, I fear he has any Chance of Doing. Your Brother continues as usual overwhelm'd with business, and not entirely free from some Notices of the Gout, but which yet I flatter myself will not increase to a fit. He begs his affectionate Compliments to you, and I that you wou'd forgive both the shortness and the faults of this Letter, and believe me equally however exprest

Your very affectionate Sister and Obedient Servant

HES: PITT.

M^r Pitt desires to assure you the Letters were the properest that cou'd be writ upon the occasion.

Ann, as we learn from the preceding letter, returned to Bath at once. 'M^r Thomas Pitt' (Lord Camelford) brings it to her, and here makes her acquaintance: 'It was there' (at Bath) 'in the year 1759 that I first connected that friendship with her which still leaves so many mixed sensations on my mind.' Ann, it may confidently be said, left mixed sensations on all minds. The next note announces the birth of the young William Pitt.

Hayes. May y^e 28^th. 1759.

Dear Sister,—I have the satisfaction to acquaint you, of what you was so good to wish to hear; Lady Hester was safely delivered of a Boy this morning, after a labour rather severe, but she and the Child are, thank God, as well as can be. You will give us a very real pleasure by good accounts of your own health which we hope is much better

for the journey alone, and that waters will not fail to be of great assistance towards a perfect recovery. I am
Dear Sister Your most affectionate Brother,
W. PITT.

I can't help mentioning to you the waters and Bath of Buxton : which for a languid perspiration and obstructions in the smaller vessels, have done wonders.

Next comes a short letter from William, only notable from his anxiety about Squire Allworthy.

St. James's Square. July 24th, 1759.

Dear Sister,—Your letter on the subject of Mr. Allen's Health gave me, with the Pain of learning he had been ill, the Satisfaction of understanding that the attack was, in some degree over ; that to Lady Hester giving an account of the terrible nature of his complaint, having follow'd Her to Wotton, where she now is.

I trust that the next accounts from Prior Park will be favourable and that the best of men, who feels and relieves the most the sufferings of others, may not Himself suffer the severest of Pains. I learn with great satisfaction the considerable amendment you mention in your own Health, and the promising prospects of deriving much benefit from Tunbridge. I hope You will not let too much of this fine season for mineral waters pass, before you repair to Them, and that their effects, when you try them, will fully answer your own and your Friends expectation.

I am Dear Sister Your most affectionate Brother,
W. PITT.

if Lord Paulett be still at Bath, I beg my compliments to his Lordship.

It is perhaps well, for the preservation of continuity, to print the following letter from Lady Hester to her sister-in-law :

Tuesday. St. James's Square. Aug. 29th.

I am so much in Arrear to You, my Dear Madam, and upon so many accounts, that I don't know where to begin first to acquit my Self to You. I feel I want now most to justifie my self to you for not having before exprest how sensible I am to the various Marks I have received of your very obliging Attention upon all the Subjects that you knew wou'd give me the greatest pleasure. The Fact is that an unexpected Journey to Wotton, from which place I return'd but Last night, interfered with my intention of writing to You, and of returning you my sincerest thanks for the great Satisfaction your Letter gave me. It included everything that cou'd make it pleasing to Me, and renew'd all my own Joy for our Successes with Yours added to it, which was a great improvement of all I felt before, and particularly for Louisbourg, *Dear*, as you know so many ways. I am charmed with my rings, which are after an English Taste that I hope will be followed, and grow fashionable enough to encourage a Variety of Patterns. Last night brought a Large Package from Bath directed to Your Brother, and intended we guess for the Young Militia Man at Hayes. It contained besides a present for Miss Hetty, both which will be faithfully deliver'd this evening, and the sentiments they inspire shall be in due time communicated. In the Interval I believe I must apply to you my Dear Madam to assure the kind sender of my share of pleasure in the present. Miss Mary's Letter received Last night, gave a great deal of Satisfaction to both your Brother and Me by the account of Your Health, and the Progress You have made in a returning to a Diet of Solid Food, a sort of Sustenance so much more likely to restore and confirm your Strength and Spirits than any other. We are glad to find that Doctor Oliver has your approbation, and that he seems to reason with great sense and probability upon your case, and what it is likely to end in. the Gout is not a very desirable Thing, but only comparatively, where the constitution is not strong, for then there ar many Disorders to which people are Liable that are much worse. I am vastly pleased that Our

House has the honour of being approved by you, and should be delighted if I cou'd be so happy as to receive You in it, and wish extremely that it was furnish'd and fit for Your reception, but I find Mr. Pitt thinks that it is not proper to have hired furniture put into it, as well as that you cou'd not be so conveniently accommodated in a House so circumstanced, as you will be in the very commodious Lodgings which Bath affords. We are meditating a journey to Hayes the moment Mr. Pitt returns from Kensington, which makes it impossible for me to say as much as I wish to You upon the different Subjects in this Letter, being obliged to give an account of my journey to the Friends I met at Wotton who are now disperst. May I beg you to give my Love to Miss Mary, and to say I hope she will admit what I have been saying as an excuse for my not acknowledging by this Post in a letter to Her what I have in my sentiments acknowledged ever since I heard from her, that I was indebted to her for the Prettiest, as well as the most Obliging, Letter in the World, besides her Bath Fairing which I value properly. I shall only now repeat my request that You will believe me Always my Dear Madam

Your affectionate Sister and most Obedient Servant,

H. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt will endeavour to serve the Chevalier de Chaila as you desire.

All so far had been harmonious enough. Unfortunately, there now occurred a second misunderstanding, to which the ensuing letters relate. It is best to give Lord Camelford's account, which, though mysterious enough, is all we have. 'Her Physicians advising her to discontinue the Waters for a short time to give trial to a course of med'cines, she determin'd to accompany me to London, to see some old friends after a long absence, and to transact certain business, and then to return to Bath. Fearing, however, that her unexpected arrival at her Lodgings in Leicester House might have objections, or that there might be difficulties in her lodging any where in London, she stop'd short at Sion at Ly. Holdernesse's, her particular friend, from whence she removed to Kensington to a house Mr. Cresset lent her. This Journey gave offence to her Brother, and occasion'd their second quarrel. Instead of managing a temper too like his own, instead of yielding to her repeated request of seeing him, when with gentleness he might have explained his wishes to her and have persuaded to whatever he thought best for her or for himself, he satisfied himself with dark hints, imperious messages, and ambiguous menaces convey'd thro' Ly. Hester and his Sister Mary, neither of whom were very happy in the arts of conciliation. Frightened, confounded, and at the same time exasperated by so strange a conduct, she tried to return to Bath, but her strength would not admit of her getting half way thro' the Journey. She return'd to Kensington—she got medical advice—she saw a few of her old friends, who soon disproved the falsities that were every day propagated of her State of Health—by degrees she saw all her fears vanish—the World return to her and nobody flie from her but the Person from whom she expected her chief countenance and support. She sounded the Princess, and found she was at full liberty to live where she pleased, except that the former intimacy was at an end. She met her Brother accidentally at Ly. Yarmouth's, he kiss'd her on both sides with the affectation of the warmest affection; whilst he refused to visit her and his whole family were hostile to her in the cruelest manner.'

The whole affair is obscure, and is not elucidated by the letters of Pitt and his wife which follow. Lady Hester is civil and kind enough, though evidently forbidden to visit or receive her sister-in-law. But what Pitt means by his allusion to 'desultory jaunts,' and 'hovering about London,' and conduct 'too imprudent and restless or as too mysterious' for him to be connected with it, we cannot now conjecture. What harm a spinster of forty-eight could do by staying with Lady Holdernesse at Sion, and thence moving to Kensington, and being undecided as to her plans, it is not easy to determine. It is possible, on considering the whole affair, Ann's own temperate reply, and all that followed, that Pitt knew that his sister was seeking a pension, for which purpose she had gone to Sion and to Kensington (for Lady Holdernesse was the wife of a Secretary of State, and Cresset was a man of influence), and desirous that his name should not be connected with the pension list at this moment of unrivalled popularity and power, he was anxious to have no communication with her. There is a still more probable explanation of Pitt's annoyance with his sister's behaviour. We have seen that Lord Camelford speaks of the 'falsities that were every day propagated about her state of health.' In a letter soon to follow she herself speaks of her stay in France 'before my spirits were so much disordered as they have been since.' Some years afterwards, Horace Walpole wrote of her that she had at times been out of her senses. It seems possible, then, that one of these attacks had taken place at Bath, and that she had broken loose from constraint and come up to London, which would revive the gossip about her condition, and so cause annoyance to her brother, who thought that peremptoriness was the only method of getting her back again to Bath. If this were so, he acted wisely, as she appears to have returned to Bath at once. This last conjecture seems the more probable explanation. In any case the circumstances of the people and the times were full of electricity. Pitt was busy, gouty and irritable; Bute was much above the horizon. Ann was eccentric, wilful, and wayward. Soon afterwards, she had a pension, which annoyed her brother. This is all that we can be said to know. We do not even know the date of this episode.

From Lady Hester Pitt.

It is my Dear Madam extremely unfortunate that from different circumstances which have interpos'd themselves, I have not had it in my power to have the pleasure of seeing you since your arrival in the neighbourhood of London, and I am quite concern'd that by Your Brother's business I am so circumstanced today, as to make it impossible for me to receive that Satisfaction. There is to be a meeting of the Cabinet here this Evening, which Always engrosses my Apartment and banishes me to other quarters. We are but just arrived from the Country, which I think has done your Brother good. He desires I wou'd assure you of his affectionate Compliments, and Let you know that his present Pressure of business is so great that it does not leave him the Command of a quarter of an hour of his time, so as to be able to assure himself beforehand of the pleasure of seeing any friend. therefore under that uncertainty, and fearing he may miss of the Satisfaction of meeting You, he desires thro' me to wish you a safe return to Bath, so much the best place, He is perfectly convinced, for Your Health. We are both very glad to hear you have had a confirmation from Doctor Pitt of the efficacy you may expect to find in those waters for your Complaints. I must not end my Note without expressing how much I was flattered by your remembrance of Little Hetty, tho' I trust Miss Mary did not forget me upon that subject, no more than on that of my real Concern for its being impossible for me to wait upon You, and say for myself how much I feel obliged to You for your kind Letter and message. The Compliments of the season attend You my Dear Madam with many good wishes.

St. James's Square. Tuesday.

St. James's Square. Monday. Jan. 15*th.*

Dear Madam,—Mr. Pitt is this moment come to Town, and so overwhelm'd with business, that it is quite impossible for Him to write a word to You Himself, in answer to your Note which he has just received. He is very sorry to find you are ill, and wishes me to tell you that you have mistaken Him in thinking he meant to express any desire of His as to your Going, or Staying, which he always meant to Leave to your own Decision, but only to offer you his opinion, and never proposes to take upon Him to give you any further Advice with regard to the place of Your residence, which you have all right independent of any thing with respect to Him to determine as You please for Yourself. I am extremely concern'd to hear your disorder is increased so much as to have made your return to Kensington necessary, as I fear your Situation There must be very uncomfortable and Disagreeable, without Servants, or any of those Conveniences, which are so particularly of Consequence when any body is ill. I hope most sincerely to have the pleasure of hearing you are better, and Able to prosecute what ever May be thought best for Your Health, being very truly Dear Madam

Your Most Affectionate and Most Obed^{t}

H. Pitt.

Friday Morning.

Dear Sister,—I desire to assure you that all Idea of *Quarrel* or *unkindness,* (words I am griev'd to find you cou'd employ) was never farther from my mind than during your stay in this neighbourhood. on the Contrary, my Dear Sister, nothing but kindness and regard to your Good, on the whole, has made me judge it necessary that we should not meet during the Continuance you think fit to give to an excursion so unexpected, and so hurtfull to you. I beg my Dear Sister not to mistake my wishes to see Her set down, for a time, quiet and collected within her own Resources of Patience and fortitude, (merely as being best and the only fit thing for Herself) so very widely as to suppose, that my Situation as a Publick Person, is any way concern'd in her residing in one Place or another. all I mean is, that, *for your own sake*, you shou'd abstain from all desultory jaunts, such as the present. the hearing of you all at once, at Sion; next at Kensington, then every day going, and now not yet gone, certainly carries an appearance disadvantageous to you in this view; I have refused myself the pleasure of seeing You; as considering your journey and hovering about London, as too imprudent and restless, or as too mysterious, for me not to discourage such a conduct, by remaining unmixt with it. this is the only cause of my not seeing you, nor can I give you a more real proof of my affectionate regard for your welfare than by thus refusing myself a great pleasure, and, I fear, giving you a Pain. I offer you no Advice, as to the choice of your residence. I am persuaded you want none; you have a right and are well able to judge for yourself on this point. but if you will not fix somewhere You are undone. I am sorry to be forc'd to say this much; but saying less I should cease to be with truest affection Dear Sister

Ever Yrs
W. PITT.

ANN PITT TO HER BROTHER.

Dear Brother,—I am going to set out to return to Bath, but as the letter I received from you yesterday leaves me in great anxiety and perplexity of mind, I can not set out without assuring you, as I do with the most exact truth, that there was no mistery in my journey here, nor no purpose but the relief I proposed to my mind. If I had known before I left the Bath that you disapproved of my leaving that place at this time, or of my coming to Town, I wou'd not have done as I have done, and wou'd not even have come near it, tho' the advice given me at Oxford with regard to my health, made me desire to make use of the interval in which I was order'd not to try the waters again, to have the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing You and some of my friends and as I hoped that satisfaction from You in the first place, I will not dissemble that I am very much disappointed and mortified in not having seen you, but as the hurry of important business you are in, and the relief necessary to make you go through it, made it possible for me not to interpret your not seeing me as a mark of unkindness, I never used the word (the word) but to guard against other people using it, upon a circumstance which I thought they had nothing to do with.

When I writ you word from the Bath that I had thoughts of coming to Town for Christmas, I desir'd nothing so much as to do what was most proper according to my situation, and consequently to have your advice, which I told you, very sincerely I wished to be guided by preferably to every other consideration, You best know how I am to attain the end I have steadily desired for Years, as you know I writ you word from France (before my spirits were so much disorder'd as they have been since) that I desired nothing as much as a safe and honourable retreat, that wou'd leave me the enjoyment of my Friends, without which help and suport I find by a painfull experience that it is impossible for me to suport myself. I beg leave to trouble you with my compliments to Lady Hester, and my wishes for the happiness of you both, and of all the little family that belong to you.

I am D B^r^ &c.

This undated note appears to belong to the same time as the preceding ones, and tends to confirm the hypothesis that it was Ann's mental condition that gave rise to anxiety.

From Lady Hester Pitt.

Dear Madam,—Having informed Mr. Pitt, who is this moment come home, that you intend going to the Lodgings in Lisle Street, He wou'd not set down to dinner without desiring me to let you know from Him that this intention of Yours gives him the greatest surprise and not Less concern for *Your sake*, being unalterably persuaded that Retreat is the only right Thing for your Health, Welfare, and Happiness, and that Bath in Your present state seems to be the fittest Place.

St. James's Square Wednesday past four o'clock.

We now come to the famous affair of the pension. Ann has evidently written to ask her brother's interest for a pension. He replies that on such a subject he would rather not speak, much less write to her, and gives her plainly to understand that he washes his hands of the whole business. She now turned to Bute. 'Having lost, therefore,' writes Camelford, 'all the hopes she had founded on her brother's friendship, which now turned to open enmity, she tried the generosity of L^d^ Bute upon the King's succession, who, not unwilling to give M^r^ Pitt a sensible mortification in the shape of a civility, procured for her a pension that was no small comfort in addition to her slender income, which was afterwards again augmented to £1000 p. a., at the instance of her friend M. de Nivernois, upon the peace.'

Dear Sister,—I hoped long before now to have been able to call on you, and in that hope have delayed answering a letter on a subject so very nice and particular, that I cou'd, with difficulty and but imperfectly, enter into it even in conversation. I am sure I need not say to one of your knowledge of the world, that explaining of Situations is not a small Affair, at any time, and in the present moment I dare say You are too reasonable to wish me to do it. In this state I have only to assure you of my sincerest wishes for your advantage and happiness, and that I shall consider any good that arrives to you as done to myself, which I shall be ready to acknowledge as such: but having never been a Sollicitor of favours, upon any occasion, how can I become so now without contradicting the whole tenour of my Life? I think there is no foundation for your apprehensions of anything distressfull being intended, and I hope you will not attribute, what I have said to any motive that may give you uneasiness, being very truely

Dear Sister Your affectionate Brother

Nov. 24: 1760. W. Pitt.

After the letter in which Pitt sheers off from the pension, there was evidently an announcement from Ann that it had been granted to her on the recommendation of Lord Bute. This is lost. But we have Pitt's unpleasing congratulation. This was the note which Ann was with difficulty restrained from returning to Pitt, having altered it to suit the circumstances of the case, when Pitt's wife was granted a much larger pension.

Dear Sister,—Accept sincere felicitations from Lady Hester and me on the Event you have just communicated. on your account, I rejoice at an addition of income so agreeable to your turn of life, whatever repugnancy I find, at the same time, to see my Name placed on the Pensions of Ireland. unmixt as I am in this whole transaction, I will not doubt that you will take care to have it thoroughly understood. long may you live in health to enjoy the comforts and happiness which you tell me you owe to the King, singly through the intercession of Lord Bute, and to feel the pleasing sentiments of such an obligation.

I am Dear Sister Your most affectionate Brother

Tuesday Dec. 30th 1760. W. Pitt.

Then follows Ann's reply, which may be judged not unconciliatory when her fierce temperament is taken into consideration. She elaborately and almost humbly vindicates her pension against her brother's sarcastic strictures.

Dear Brother,—I must trouble you again, not only to return my thanks to Lady Hester and yourself, for your obliging felicitations, But as I have the mortification of finding, that for some reasons which I can not judge of, You feel a repugnancy to the mark of favour I have had the honour to receive, and desire—it may be throughly understood that you had no share in the transaction—I ought to make you easy, by assuring you, as I do, that so far as I think proper to communicate an event, which will not naturally be very publick, I will take care to explain the truth, by which it will appear that you are no way concern'd in it, and that it has no sort of relation to your Situation as Minister, since my request was first made to the Princess many years ago, as Her Royal Highnesess Servant, as I am pretty sure I explained to you in a letter from France, and repeated to you at my return, as the foundation of my hopes of obtaining the Princesses approbation for any establishment you might have procured for me. And tho' the Provision I have been so happy to obtain from His Majesty's Bounty is of the utmost importance to me and answers every wish I cou'd form with regard to my income, yet when I was allow'd to say how much wou'd make me easy, I fix'd it at a sum, which I flatter myself will not be thought exorbitant, or appear as if I had wanted to avail myself of the weight of your credit, or the merit of your services to obtain it.

As to your objection to your Names (*sic*) being upon the Irish Pensions, I do not believe that any mistake can be made, from mine being there. And as to myself, I very sincerely think it an honour that is very flattering to me, to have received so precious a mark of the Royal favour, and to have my Name upon the same List not only with some of the highest and the most deserving persons in England, but even with some of the greatest and most glorious names in Europe. If I have tired you with a longer letter than I intended, I have been lead (*sic*) into it, by the sincere desire I have, that an advantage so very essential to the ease and comfort of the remainder of a Life, which has not hitherto been very happy, shou'd not be a cause of uneasiness to You. I am

Alas for the freakful fate which plays with poor humanity and its concerns! The next letter announces another pension, not to Ann, but to Pitt's wife. So soon after the other correspondence, not ten months! No wonder that Ann was tempted to the vengeance that has been described. Even though she refrained we may imagine her unrestrained scoffs and her bitter laughter.

Dear Madam,—I was out of Town Yesterday, or otherwise I shou'd have had the pleasure of informing You that His Majesty has been Graciously pleas'd to confer the Dignity of Peerage on Your Brother's Family, by creating Me Baroness of Chatham with Limitation to our Sons. The King has been farther pleas'd to make a Grant of Three Thousand Pounds a Year to Mr. Pitt for his own Life, Mine, and our Eldest Son's in consideration of Mr. Pitt's Services, We do not doubt of the Share You will take in these Gracious Marks of his Majesties Royal Approbation and Goodness.

I am Dear Madam Your most Obedient Servant

HES: PITT.

Sunday Morning

Some four years afterwards Ann received this short note, which shows that there was no rupture of relations; and the tone indeed is cordial for the period, when the expression of the warmest affection was far from gushing.

Burton-Pynsent *Aug. y^e^* 1^st^ 1765.

I am extremely obliged to you, Dear Sister, for the trouble you are so good to take of writing to enquire after my health, which I found mend on the journey and by change of air. I still continue lame, but have left off one Crutch, which is no small advance; tho' with only one Wing my flights, you will imagine, are as yet very short: the Country of Somersetshire is beautifull and tempts much to extend them. I hope your health is much better and that you have found the way to subdue all your complaints, or at least to reduce them within such bounds, as leave your life comfortable and agreeable. Lady Chatham desires to present her compliments to you.

I am Dear Sister Your affectionate Brother

William Pitt.

And now there come the last sad words, the last sign of life that William gives to Ann. It is not without significance that even at this period of prostration he bids his wife tell Ann that his official life is ended. It does not appear that there had ever been or was ever to be any formal reconciliation between them. But through all the gusts and squalls and storms that had troubled their intercourse an underlying tenderness had survived.

Hayes. Oct. 21st. 1768.

Madam,—The very weak and broken state of my Lord's health having reduced him to the necessity of supplicating the King to grant him the permission to resign the Privy Seal, he has desir'd I wou'd communicate this Step to You.

I am Madam, Your most Obedient Humble Servant

H. Chatham.

About this time (1768) she took up her abode at Kensington Gravel Pits, in the region of Notting Hill, 'where out of a very ugly odd house and a flat piece of ground with a little dirty pond in the middle of it, she has made a very pretty place; she says she has "hurt her understanding" in trying to make it so.'[1] Before that time she seems to have lived for a while at Twickenham; at least Horace Walpole speaks of her as a close neighbour. Being fairly launched as a pensioner, she throve on the system, and eventually accumulated a treble allowance; this Bute pension, another procured by M. de Nivernois, and another, mentioned by Horace Walpole in a letter of Nov. 25, 1764, which must have raised her whole income from this source to some 1500*l.* a year. On this she entertained, and frolicked, and danced. We hear of her choice but miniature balls, and her band of French horns, which Horace Walpole enjoyed and described. But her intercourse with William, once so bright and genial, was ended, and that is all with which we are here concerned. A frigid letter or two counted as nothing in a connection which had once been as intimate as it was delightful.

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[1] Delany, iv. 156.

Ann went on living at Kensington a somewhat frivolous life so far as we know anything about it, in intimate relations with Horace Walpole and his society. But in 1774 she went abroad, under the auspices of the Butes, to Italy, to Pisa and elsewhere. Then came her brother's sudden death. Though she had been so long aloof from him, the shock finally shattered her reason, which, it would appear, had already given cause for apprehension. Chatham died May 11, 1778. She soon returned to England, and in the October of that year Horace Walpole writes that she is 'in a very wild way, and they think must be confined.'[1] In the following May he announces that she is actually under restraint.[2] There is a letter at Chevening from her to her niece, Lady Mahon, dated 'Burnham, May 9, 1779,' which betrays her distraught condition. Burnham was probably that 'one of Dr. Duffell's houses' to which she had been removed. On Feb. 9, 1781, she dies, still in confinement. Lady Bute, it should be noted, was kind and attentive to the end.[3]

[1] Walpole to Mann, Oct. 30, 1778,

[2] Ib. May 9, 1779.

[3] Delany, v. 403–5.

'She was in Italy at the time of his (Chatham's) death,' writes Lord Camelford, who was probably there too. 'I can bear witness that the grief she felt at the reflection of his having died without a reconciliation with her made such an impression of tenderness on her mind that not only obliterated all remembrance of his unkindness, but recoiled upon herself, as if she had been the offending party, and doubtless contributed greatly to the melancholy state in which she died.'

Horace Walpole, who had come to hate all Pitts, confirms this in his sardonic way. 'Did I tell you that M^{rs} Ann Pitt is returned and acts great grief for her brother?' and he goes on to say that Camelford himself 'gave a little into that mummery, even to me; forgetting how much I must remember of his aversion to his uncle.'

There were perhaps few genuine tears save those of wife and children shed over the grave of the grim, disconcerting old statesman, for men of his type are beyond friendship: they inspire awe, not affection; they deal with masses, not with individuals; they have followers, admirers, and an envious host of enemies, rarely a friend. But Ann had no reason to feign grief or self-reproach. She had lost her first love, her only love, the love of her life. It is probable that the brother and sister had understood each other throughout in their quick-kindling, petulant way. 'My brother, who has always seemed to guess and understand all I felt of every kind,' she wrote in 1757;[1] a sentence which is a clue to all. The memory of childhood, the glad sympathies of youth, the impressions received when their characters were plastic and fresh, the habit of close intimacy for the score of years during which intimacy was possible for him, all these contributed to form a bond which survived the skirmishes and collisions of their later lives. Two persons of highly charged temperament, and of natures too much akin, who understood each other, respected each other, and perhaps secretly enjoyed each other's ebullitions, such were Ann and William after they separated in 1746. Their long affection is interesting if only that it seemed impossible that two such characters should agree even for a time. And therefore, though the narrative of this episode has swollen beyond all limit and proportion, the space is not lost, for it is invaluable to the student of Pitt's career. It lights up the only expressed tenderness in his life, it is the one relief to his sombre nature, it is the sole record that we have of the unbending of that grim and stately figure.

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[1] Lady Suffolk's Letters, ii. 234.

CHAPTER V.

IN 1734 there had been a fiercely contested General Election, and Thomas Pitt had been returned for both Okehampton and Old Sarum. He elected to sit for Okehampton, and nominated his brother, William, together with his brother-in-law, Nedham, for the other borough. So, on February 18, 1735, William was returned Member for the notorious borough of Old Sarum; an area of about sixty acres of ploughed land, on which had once stood the old city of Salisbury, but which no longer contained a single house or a single resident. The electorate consisted of seven votes. When an election took place the returning officer brought with him a tent, under which the necessary business was transacted.[1]

To such a constituency it was superfluous, and indeed impossible, to offer an election address, or an exposition of policy. But William's politics could not be other than those of his brother and nominator, though it would seem that Thomas conformed to William rather than William to Thomas. We have seen some indications in his letters to Ann that Thomas had been favourable to Sir Robert

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[1] Porritt's Unreformed House of Commons, i. 35. T. Mozley when the nineteenth century was well advanced saw the constituency of Old Sarum in the person of 'a bright looking old fellow with a full rubicund face and a profusion of white hair.' Reminiscences, ii. 13.

Walpole, and that so late as November 1734. But it seems probable that William, who was united in private friendship with Lyttelton and the Grenvilles, was drawn to them by political sympathy as well, and was thus in agreement with the fiercest section of the Opposition. By the time that William was elected, Thomas, who was connected with the same group by marriage, must also have thrown in his political lot with it, or he would not have nominated his brother. For William, though only a cornet of horse, was known to be an enemy, and a redoubtable enemy, to the Minister. On this point we have clear evidence in a remarkable statement by Lord Camelford, which will be quoted later.

William's political opinions were then, we may safely suppose, the result of family connection, for through his brother and his own friendships he was closely united with that band of politicians who met and caballed at Stowe, the stately residence of Lord Cobham. There he was a visitor for the first time this year (1735). His stay lasted not less than four months, from the beginning of July to the end of October. He could scarcely have remained so long without being enrolled in this small but important group, even had he not been enlisted already. But he was probably a recruit before his visit began. His brother, as we have seen, had married Christian Lyttelton, Cobham's niece; George, afterwards Lord Lyttelton, was her brother, and Cobham's nephew, as well as William's intimate friend; Richard and George Grenville, the first of whom is better known as Lord Temple, and the second as a laborious but intolerable prime minister, were Cobham's nephews; Richard, indeed, was his heir. A family connection was thus formed, which, at first held up to ridicule under the nickname of 'Cobham's cubs,' or 'The Cousins,' or 'The Boy Patriots,' was to be for the next thirty years a notable factor in political history, and a sinister element in Pitt's career.

So it may be well here to turn aside for a moment to consider these Grenvilles, who exercised so singular and baleful an influence on Pitt, and indeed on public affairs in general. For from the moment that Pitt became their brother-in-law, he was adopted as one of the brotherhood and choked in their embraces. From this mortal entanglement he emancipated himself too late. It was then patent how different his career would have been had he had a man of common-sense at his elbow, or at least an unselfish adviser. George Grenville, however, complained on his side that the connection had been fatal to the peace and happiness of the Grenvilles.[1]

Who was the chief of this combination? Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham, best remembered as the 'brave Cobham' to whom Pope addressed his first Epistle and as the founder of the dynasty and palace of Stowe, was not merely a soldier who had served with distinction under Marlborough, but a fortunate courtier on whom the House of Hanover had heaped constant and signal honours. He was created first a Baron, then a Viscount, Constable of Windsor Castle, Governor of Jersey, a Privy Councillor, Colonel of the First Dragoons, and was afterwards to become a Field Marshal and Colonel of the Horse Guards. He had, hints Shelburne, some of the Shandean humour of Marlborough's veterans, but his portrait shows a keen, refined, perhaps sensitive countenance; he was also something of a bashaw.[1] Sated with military honours, and always a staunch Whig, he had now taken to conspicuous politics and splendour; politics exacerbated by a personal slight, and splendour displayed in sumptuous hospitality, princely buildings, and lavish magnificence of gardens. These, laid out under the supervision of Lancelot Brown, extended at last to not less than four hundred acres. Here he erected pavilions and shrines in the fashion of those times; the most daring of which was one to commemorate his friendships, with which politics had made sad havoc before the temple was completed. Here he kept open house in the spacious and genial fashion of that time, and entertained Pope, Congreve, Bolingbroke, Pulteney, the wits as well as the princes of the day. From these pleasing cares he had recently been diverted by one of those needless affronts which seem so inconsistent with the robust and genial character of Walpole, but to the infliction of which Walpole was singularly prone. On account of his opposition to the Excise Bill, Cobham had been deprived of his regiment, the same, by-the-bye, in which Pitt was a subaltern. Stung to political ardour by this insult, he had begun to form a faction of violent opposition, of which his nephews and their friends were the nucleus. Thus began that formidable influence which had its home and source at Stowe for near a century afterwards, and which for three generations patiently and persistently pursued the ducal coronet which was the darling object of its successive chiefs.

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[1] Grenville Papers, i. 423.

Cobham, then, founded the family, and, so long as he lived, directed their operations, with too much perhaps of the spirit of a martinet. When he died his fortune and title passed to his sister, afterwards, as we shall see, Countess Temple in her own right, the mother of the Grenvilles with whom we are concerned.

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[1] Grenville Papers, i. 423–5.

There were originally five Grenville brothers: Richard, George, James, Henry, and Thomas. Three of these, however, are outside our limits. Thomas, a naval officer of signal promise, was killed in action off Cape Finisterre in May 1747. James and Henry were cyphers, not ill provided for at the public charge. Both seem to have broken loose at one time from the tyranny of the brotherhood: James at first siding with Richard against George in 1761; and Henry, whom we find Richard anxious, on opposite grounds it is to be presumed, to oust from the representation of Buckingham in 1774. James, who, says Horace Walpole, 'had all the defects of his brothers and had turned them to the best account,' was Deputy Paymaster to Pitt; and Henry was a popular Governor of Barbadoes, as well as Ambassador at Constantinople for four years, after which both subsided into the blameless occupation of various sinecures.

Never, indeed, was family so well provided for during an entire century as the Temple-Grenvilles. Although the system by which the aristocracy lived on the country was not carried nearly as far in Great Britain as in the France of the fourteenth Louis and his successor, yet it had no inconsiderable hold. Even the austere George, though averse in Burke's expressive language to 'the low, pimping politics of a Court,' did not disdain, when Prime Minister, to hurry to the King to announce the death of Lord Macclesfield and secure for his son, afterwards Marquis of Buckingham, the reversion of the Irish Tellership of the Exchequer thus vacated;[1] nor, a few months later, to obtain the grant of a lighthouse as a provision for his younger children.[2] The Tellership, held as it was under the unreformed conditions, was a place of vast emolument; it is not now easy to compute the amount.[3] Nor is it necessary for the purpose of this book to follow up these details. Cobbett reckoned from returns furnished to the House of Commons that this Lord Buckingham and his brother Thomas, the sons of George Grenville, had in half a century drawn 700,000*l.* of public money, and William, another brother, something like 200,000*l.* more. These figures, of course, are open to dispute, but they indicate at least that the revenues from public money of this family of sinecurists must have been enormous. Of English families the Grenvilles were in this particular line easily the first. Had all sinecurists, it may be said in passing, spent their money like the younger Thomas, who returned far more than he received by bequeathing his matchless library to the nation, the public conscience would have been much more tender towards them.

Nor was it need that drove them thus to live upon the public, for the private wealth of the family was commanding; it was the basis of their power. Richard by the death of his mother was said to have become the richest subject in England.[4] And, as time went on, his possessions swelled and swelled. The estates of Bubb[1] devolved upon him. Heiresses brought their fortunes. There seemed no end to this prosperity, and it was all utilised steadily and ceaselessly to extend the political influence of the family.

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[1] Grenville Papers, ii. 496.

[2] Ib. ii. 512.

[3] Lord Dundonald in his 'Autobiography' says that it produced 20,693*l.* p.a.

[4] Dickins and Stanton. 'An Eighteenth Century Correspondence,' 193.

So all the brothers, even the sailor Thomas, were brought into the House of Commons; and, with their connections and their discipline, so long as this was preserved, formed a redoubtable political force. They were not only a brotherhood but a confraternity. What is really admirable indeed is the pertinacity and concentration of this strange, dogged race, and their devotion, indeed subjection, to their chief; they were a political Company of Jesus. Their objects were not exalted, but from generation to generation, with a patience little less than Chinese, they pursued and ultimately attained what they desired. They were of course unpopular, because their scheme was too obvious; but they knew the value of popularity, and attempted it with pompous and crowded entertainments. They were not brilliant; but in every generation they had a man of sufficient ability, two prime ministers among them, to further their cause. They built, no doubt, on inadequate foundations, but these lasted just long enough to enable the structure to be crowned. It is a singular story; there is nothing like it in the history of England; it resembles rather the persistent annals of the hive.

The career of Pitt is concerned with only two of these Grenvilles, Richard and George. These two men had this at least in common, an amazing opinion of themselves. They were in their own estimation as good as or better than any one else. They resented the slightest idea of any disparity between themselves and Pitt. On what this prodigious estimate was founded we shall never know; we can only conjecture that it was the combination of fortune and family with some ability that made them deem their position at least equal to his. When Pitt had raised Britain from abasement to the first position in the world, when he was indisputably the greatest orator and the greatest power in the country, the Grenvilles considered themselves at the least as Pitt's equals, and him as only one and not the first of a triumvirate. In 1769, when Pitt was reconciled to them, Temple trumpeted the 'union of the three brothers' as the greatest fact in contemporary history. As the alliance of a man of genius with great parliamentary influence and powers of intrigue it was undoubtedly a political fact of note. But any disparity between the three personalities never occurs to Temple. In 1766, he writes: 'If a lead of superiority was claimed (on the part of Pitt) it was rejected on my part with an assertion of my pretensions to an equality.' And again: 'I claimed an equality, and have no idea of yielding to him . . . . a superiority which I think it would be unbecoming in me to give.' Poor forgotten Temple! With such superb scorn did he reject the offer of the First Lordship of the Treasury, with the nomination of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and the whole Board of Treasury, when offered by the first man in Europe. An hallucination of the same kind was observed in the brothers of Napoleon. But in that case it was only noted by cynical contemporaries, in this it was proclaimed on the housetops.

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[1] It seems best to call this worthy, who assumed the name of Dodington, by his patronymic; for it is his own name, and the most appropriate.

Of Richard, the eldest, who became, as will be seen, Earl Temple, a competent and laborious critic has said that he was one of the 'most straightforward, honest, and honourable men of his age.' The age, no doubt, was not famous for public men of this type; but it was not so barren as this judgment would imply. And indeed it is difficult to discern the grounds on which it is based. To the ordinary student Temple, we imagine, will always appear a selfish and tortuous intriguer, who hoped to utilise his brother-in-law's genius and popularity for practical objects of his own. But he had other resources of a more questionable kind. He delighted in the subterranean and the obscure. 'This malignant man,' says Horace Walpole with truth and point, 'worked in the mines of successive factions for over thirty years together.' He was in constant communication with Wilkes, whom he supplied with funds. He was an active pamphleteer. So well were his methods understood that he acquired the dubious honour of a candidature for the authorship of Junius. It is almost certain at any rate that he was one of the few confidants of that remarkable secret. But his wealth and strategy and borough power were all concentrated on selfish and personal objects. As head of the Grenvilles, his design was that the Grenvilles and their connections and all other influences that he could bring to bear should co-operate for the elevation of the family in the person of its chief. For this purpose his brother-in-law, Pitt, was a priceless asset. But all the family had to serve. All of them were put into the House of Commons; and, it may be added, into the Privy Council, except Thomas, the sailor, who was prematurely removed by death. George, who under Pitt and Temple only enjoyed subordinate office was for a time lured from the family allegiance by Bute with the offer of a Secretaryship of State and the reversion of the headship. But George himself was eventually brought into line.

Temple's aims were simple and material; from the first moment that we discern him he is pursuing them with persistent but intemperate ardour. Hardly was Cobham's body cold, Cobham, his uncle and benefactor, to whom he owed everything, when we find Temple urging that his mother, Cobham's sister and heiress, should be made a Countess in her own right, with descent, of course, to himself. Cobham died on September 13; on September 28 Temple applied for this title. Even Newcastle, the most hardened of political jobbers, was shocked at his precipitation, and suggested a postponement, on the ground of common decency. Temple brushed this objection aside with contempt. He wished the thing done at once, and done it was.

Hardly had he thus been ennobled when we find him signalising his new rank by a filthy trick more suited to a barge than a court. At a reception in his own house, presided over by his charming and accomplished wife, Lord Cobham, as he was now styled, spat into the hat which Lord Hervey held in his hand. This feat Cobham had betted a guinea that he would accomplish. Hervey behaved with temper and coolness. Cobham took the hat and wiped it with profuse excuses, trying to pass the matter off as a joke; but after some days of humiliation he had to write an explicit apology with a recital of all his previous efforts to appease Hervey's resentment.[1] Such diversions, Lady Hester Stanhope declares, were common at Stowe. She narrates one scarcely less nauseous.[1]

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[1] Walpole to Mann, Feb. 25, 1750.

Having obtained the earldom, his next object was the Garter. George II. detested him, and refused the request with asperity. So Pitt had to be brought in. Pitt was then all-powerful, for this was the autumn of 1759. He wrote a note full of sombre menace to Newcastle, and demanded the Garter for Temple as a reward for his own services; but still the King refused. Then the last reserves were brought into play. Temple resigned the Privy Seal on the ground that the Garter was denied. Pitt had at the same time a peremptory interview with Newcastle. The King had to yield, but could not repress his anger. He threw the ribbon to Temple as a bone is thrown to a dog. But delicacy, as we have seen, did not trouble Temple in matters of substance, and he was satisfied.

Having obtained these two objects of ambition, he now played for a dukedom. This ambition, suspected presumably in Cobham, had been the subject of epigram so early as 1742.[2] It was avowed, according to Walpole, in 1767, and, indeed, no other explanation seems adapted to his various proceedings at critical junctures. Thus, when in June 1765, George III. and his uncle Cumberland tried to form a Pitt ministry, but found that an absolute condition of such a ministry was that Temple should be First Lord of the Treasury, Temple refused on various flimsy pretexts. When these were surmounted, he declared that 'he had tender and delicate reasons' which he did not explain to the King, or, apparently, to Pitt.[1] That this unwonted delicacy and tenderness were concentrated on the superior coronet appears from the negotiation carried on by Horace Walpole in 1767, when Lord Hertford assured him of the fact that Lord Temple's ambition was now a dukedom.[2] It is not doubtful that this had now become the central preoccupation of his life, and the hereditary object of the family combination. At first sight it would seem improbable that Pitt was aware of it, for the simple reason that he would probably have made efforts to obtain it from the King. On the other hand, it is unlikely that Temple, in the affair of the Garter, having found the inestimable value of Pitt's pressure on George II., could have foregone the effort to exercise it on George III. On the whole, the most plausible conjecture appears to be that Pitt was unsuccessfully sounded by his brother-in-law. All that we know is, that when Pitt finally determined to undertake the ministry without Temple, they had a heated interview, which seems to have left deep marks on Pitt's nerves and health, but whether it turned on Temple's particular ambition or not can now only be matter for surmise.

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[1] Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope, iii. 179.

[2] See 'The New Ministry, containing a collection of all the satyrical poems, songs, &c. 1742.'

The death of Temple made no difference to the family ambition. His nephew made violent, even frantic, but ineffectual efforts to obtain the title through Chatham's son. Nor were other means of aggrandisement neglected. By marriage there accrued the fortunes of Chambers, Nugent, Chandos, and, by some other way, that of Dodington. Acre was added to acre and estate to estate, often by the dangerous expedient of borrowed money, until Buckinghamshire seemed likely to become the appanage of the family. Borough influence was laboriously accumulated and maintained. Nor were nobler possessions disdained. Rare books and manuscripts, choice pictures, and sumptuous furniture were added by successive generations to the splendid collections of Stowe. Finally, in the reign of George IV., and in the time of Temple's great-nephew, the object was attained. Lord Liverpool acquired the support of the Grenville parliamentary influence by an almost commercial compact, Louis XVIII. added his instances, and Buckingham became a duke. From that moment the star of the family visibly paled. Eight years afterwards the duke had to shut up Stowe, and go abroad. Less than twenty years from then the palace was dismantled, its treasures were dispersed, the vast estates sold, and the glories of the House, built up with so much care and persistence, vanished like a snow-wreath.

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[1] Phillimore's Lyttelton, 681.

[2] Orford's George III. iii. 137.

But all this is beyond our narrative. At this time all these ambitions are concealed, there is nothing visible but cordiality, the genial flow of soul, and brotherly love. Pitt's early letters to George Grenville are among the easiest and most human that he ever wrote: he wrote nothing more unaffectedly tender than two letters he sent in September and October 1742, to George, then abroad for his health. Richard and George Grenville, Lyttelton and William Pitt, with their set, form one of those engaging companionships of youth, when high spirits, warm affections, and the dayspring of life combine to animate a friendship without guile or suspicion.

Then come separation, marriage, new interests, new ambitions, and the paths diverge, perhaps till sunset. So it was with these young men. They all at times quarrelled, even the kindly Lyttelton was driven to separation. Later, again, they all came together again in some fashion or another, with the exception, perhaps, of George, whose obstinate self-love when wounded could never be healed.

But now all was dawn and blossom and smiles. The friends are full of banter. Their politics are half a frolic. Life is all before them. Its conditions will harden them presently, and they will wrangle and snarl, and have their quarrels and huffs. But that is not yet; not even a coming shadow is visible. Still, even now, it is necessary to indicate the nature and consequences of Pitt's absorption into the cousinhood.

CHAPTER VI.

IT is here that his public career begins. His lot was cast in stirring times. For the year of his entry into Parliament was the fourteenth of Walpole's long administration, and it was not difficult to see menacing cracks in the structure. The Minister himself seems to have been aware that his position was critical; and at the general election in the previous year he had spared no exertions to secure a majority. In his own county of Norfolk, 10,000*l*, had been spent in support of his candidates without averting their defeat: from his own private means he is said, no doubt with gross exaggeration, to have expended no less than 60,000*l*. Figures like these, however swollen by rumour, denote the intensity of the struggle. But in spite of all, his losses were considerable. Even Scotland, in those days the hungry dependant of all Governments, was shaken in her allegiance. And, though he gained the victory, the toughness of the contest betokened clearly that his stability was seriously impaired, and that the country was weary of his domination.

For this there were many obvious causes. One, of course, was the universal unpopularity of the Excise scheme. It was also one of the moments in our history when the country is uneasily conscious of weakness and possible humiliation abroad, and when the silent and passive interests of peace weigh lightly in the balance against the smarting burden of wounded self-respect. But the most operative cause lay in Walpole himself.

There is no enigma about Walpole. He sprang from near a score of generations of Norfolk squires who had spent six hundred years in healthy obscurity and the simple pleasures of the country. None of them apparently had brains, or the need of them. From these he inherited a frame hardy and robust, and that taste for the sports of the field that never left him. He had also the advantage of being brought up as a younger son to work, and thus he gained that self-reliant and pertinacious industry which served him so well through long years of high office. From the beginning to the end he was primarily a man of business. Had he not been a politician it cannot be doubted that he would have been a great merchant or a great financier. And, though his lot was cast in politics, a man of business he essentially remained. This is not to say that he was not a consummate parliamentary debater, for that he must have been. But it is to suggest that the key to Walpole's character as Prime Minister lies in his instincts and qualifications as a man of business. His main tendency was not, as with Chesterfield and Carteret and Bolingbroke, towards high statesmanship. His first object was to carry on the business of the country in a business spirit, as economically and as peacefully as possible. His chief preoccupation apart from this was the keeping out of the rival house of Stuart, which would not have employed the firm of Walpole and the Whigs to keep their accounts. It is quite possible that as a patriot he may have also dreaded the probable evils of the Stuart dynasty. But the first reason is amply sufficient. The corruption of which he was undoubtedly guilty, but of which he was by no means the inventor, he perhaps considered as the commission due to customers; or else he may have argued, 'these men have to be bought by somebody, let us do it in a business-like way.' His merciless crushing of any rivals was simply the big firm crushing competition, a familiar feature of commerce. His carrying on a war against Spain in spite of his own conscientious disapproval can only be satisfactorily explained on the same hypothesis. The nation would have war: well, if it must, he could carry it on more cheaply, and limit its mischief more effectually than any other contractor. Moreover, Walpole had all along been the merchants' man. He had given them peace and wealth. Now for commercial purposes they wanted war and he had to gratify them. They had been the main backers of his administration, the deprivation of their support would have left him bare; so when they turned round he had to follow, with scarcely the appearance of leadership.

In these days we should undoubtedly condemn any statesman who declared a war of which he disapproved. Lord Aberdeen morbidly and unjustly accused himself of this offence, and refused to be comforted. That is the other extreme to Walpole's position. But we must remember the political morality of those times. Was there then living a statesman who would have acted differently? From this sweeping question we cannot except Pitt, who was bitterly denouncing Walpole for his pacific attitude, and had afterwards to confess that Walpole had been right.

We regard Walpole, then, first and foremost as a man of business, led into the great error with which history reproaches him by his brother men of business. Still, his qualities in that capacity would not have maintained him for years as Prime Minister. They proved him to be a hard-working man with practical knowledge of affairs and strong common sense; a sagacious man who hated extremes. He had besides the highest qualities of a parliamentary leader. Of imagination, unless it may be inferred from his palace and picture gallery, he seems to have been totally destitute. But he had dauntless courage and imperturbable temper.

To his courage George II., who was not profuse of praise, gave ardent testimony. 'He is a brave fellow,' he would cry out vehemently, with a flush and an oath, 'he has more spirit than any man I ever knew;' a compliment ill-requited by Sir Robert, who declared that his master, if he knew anything of him, was, 'with all his personal bravery, as great a political coward as ever wore a crown.' Early in his career as Prime Minister Sir Robert, who had the art, rare among eighteenth century politicians, of inditing pointed and pregnant letters, had written to an Irish Viceroy: 'I have weathered great storms before now, and shall not be lost in an Irish hurricane.'[1] This was no vain boast; it was the spirit in which he habitually conducted affairs. In truth Walpole's courage stands in no need of witness, it speaks for itself; his very defects arose from it or prove it. His jealousy of ability which deprived him of precious allies and compelled him to fight single-handed, his intolerance of independence in his party which had the same effect, all show the

[1] Ballantyne's Carteret, 107.

dauntless self-confidence of the man. He wanted no competitors, no dubious allies, no assistance but that of unflagging votes or diligent service; for all else he relied on himself alone.

This great Minister had all the defects of his qualities as well as one which seemed curiously alien to them. Part of his strength lay in a coarse and burly, if cynical, geniality. His temper, as we have said, was imperturbable; we shall see this even in the closing scene of his ministry; it was even cordial, and sometimes boisterous. He loved to seem rather a country gentleman than a statesman. He seemed most natural when shooting and carousing at Houghton, or carousing and hunting at Richmond. But his appearance was deceptive; he was what the French would call 'un faux bonhomme,' a spurious good fellow. Good nature perhaps could hardly have survived the desperate battles and intrigues in which this hard-bitten old statesman had been engaged all his life. And so under this bluff and debonair exterior there was concealed a jealousy of power, passing the jealousy of woman, and the ruthless vindictiveness of a Red Indian. To the opposition of his political foes he opposed a stout and unflinching front which shielded a gang of mediocrities; with these enemies he fought a battle in which quarter was neither granted nor expected. But his own forces were kept under martial law; anything like opposition or rivalry within his ranks he crushed in the relentless spirit of Peter the Great. By these methods he had not merely maintained an iron discipline among his own supporters, but had himself constructed by alienation and proscription the opposition to his administration, an opposition which comprised consummate abilities and undying resentments. For he had driven from him and united in a league of implacable revenge almost all the men of power and leading in Parliament. Politics to them were embodied in one controlling idea; how to compass the fall, the ruin, the impeachment of Walpole. The undaunted Minister faced them with confident serenity, though they were not enemies to be disdained. Pulteney, Wyndham, Chesterfield, and Carteret were men of the highest ability and distinction. Barnard and Polwarth, Shippen and Sandys, were from character or intellect scarcely less redoubtable. Behind them lurked Bolingbroke, excluded, indeed, from Parliament by the vigilant detestation of Walpole, but guiding and inspiring from his enforced retirement, the seer and oracle of all the Minister's enemies, for—

'Princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic, though in ruin.'

Prominent among these stately combatants was an anomalous figure with a brain as shallow and futile as St. John's was active and brilliant, but by the nature of things as formidable as Bolingbroke was impotent, Frederick Prince of Wales. For Frederick was soon to add to the second position in the country the leadership of the Opposition. The King's health was supposed to be precarious, though he lived cheerfully and not ingloriously for another quarter of a century. And the Heir Apparent, feeling conscious of his advantages, and determined to assert himself, became the complacent puppet of all the factions opposed to his father's Government. His Court, indeed, resembled that famous cave to which were gathered every one that was discontented and every one that was in distress. All who had been spurned or ousted by Walpole, all who were under the displeasure of the King, all who saw little prospect of advancement under the present reign, hastened to rally round the Heir Apparent. He was soon to employ Pitt about his person. It is well, then, to pause a moment and consider this prominent and formidable figure.

Frederick, Prince of Wales, is one of the idle mysteries of English history. The problem does not lie in his being a political leader, in spite of the general contempt in which he was held by his contemporaries and associates; for an heir-apparent to the Crown can always, if he chooses, be a factor in party politics, though it is scarcely possible that his intervention can be beneficial. But no circumstance known to us can explain the virulence of aversion with which the King and Queen regarded him, which was so intense as to be almost incredible. They were both good haters, and yet they hated no one half so much as their eldest son. His father called him the greatest beast and liar and scoundrel in existence. His mother and his sister wished hourly to hear of his death. This violence of unnatural loathing is not to be accounted for by any known facts. Frederick was a poor creature, no doubt, a vain and fatuous coxcomb. But human beings are constantly the parents of coxcombs without regarding them as vermin. The only conjecture in regard to the matter which seems to furnish adequate ground for these feelings is that the King was bred in the narrow school of a little German State, where, though nothing less than affection was expected between a prince and his heir, discipline was rigidly observed; so that the conduct of Frederick, in assuming a position independent and defiant of his father, and in openly heading an opposition to his Government, was an offence the more unspeakable and unpardonable as it had been absolutely beyond the limits of Hanoverian contemplation. There was, it must be confessed, an hereditary predisposition to this parental relation. The King himself, when Prince of Wales, had been placed under arrest by his father for the somewhat venial offence of insulting the Duke of Newcastle. He had submitted himself to his disgrace, and his opposition had only been passive and inarticulate; he had never dreamed of forming a faction hostile to the Crown. His only real crimes had been his right of succession and a fictitious popularity founded on dislike of his father's mistresses. And yet his father hated him almost as much as father ever hated son. It was reserved for George II. to discover a deeper abhorrence for his own heir. With his views of absolute authority, a peculiar degree of detestation had to be discovered for a Prince of Wales who had not merely the inherent vice of heirship apparent but the gratuitous offence of an active opposition which his father deemed flagrant rebellion. Given violent temper, ill manners, and a sort of family tradition, the cause ot wrath can best be thus explained.

Beyond this we know nothing for certain, and presumably shall never know more. There are some facts, but they are insufficient.

It is said that as a mere boy he gamed and drank and kept a mistress. By this last scandal the royal family was enabled to present to the world the unedifying spectacle of grandfather, father, and son simultaneously living under these immoral conditions; and all three, it is said, successively with the same woman. But these facts alone would certainly not have accounted for his father's displeasure. Again, it is narrated that when his tutor complained of him his mother said that these were page's tricks. 'Would to God they were, madam,' replied the tutor, 'but they are rather the tricks of lackeys and knaves.' And tricky Frederick undoubtedly was from the beginning to the end. But trickiness, though it was not among the King's faults, and though it would excite his just contempt, cannot alone have caused the intensity of his hatred.

One if not two of Frederick's escapades were concerned with designs of marriage. He was discovered on the point of concluding a secret alliance with Princess Wilhelmine of Prussia, with whom he professed himself in love, and who afterwards became known to us as Margravine of Bareith; on another occasion it is said that he was lured by a dowry of 100,000*l.* into a betrothal with Lady Diana Spencer, granddaughter of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. Both these affairs were interrupted at the last moment. In both cases the King was irritated by the underhand proceedings of his son, and by the total lack of a confidence which, as he probably omitted to remember, he had done nothing to gain. But his crowning outrage was a monkey-trick, both wanton and barbarous. When he had at last married a princess of his father's choice, and his wife was seized with the first pangs of maternity in the King's palace of Hampton Court, he hurried her off, in her agony and in spite of her entreaties, to St. James's. At any moment of the journey a catastrophe might have occurred. What the motive was for this cruel and unmeaning escapade cannot be guessed, for his own explanations were futile. It was said that his father suspected him of an intention to foist a spurious child on his family and that he resented the suspicion. If that were so his action was exactly suited to confirm it. Whatever his purpose may have been, the King and Queen, from whom the imminence of the Princess's situation had been carefully concealed, were naturally and grossly insulted. The King banished him from his palace and presence, and forbade the Court to all who should visit him. Nor was there ever an approach to reconciliation or forgiveness in the fourteen years that the Prince had yet to live. The King would receive him at Court and would express the hope that his wife was in good health; that was the extent of their relations. But though this was the culminating point of his known misconduct, it would almost seem that there was some more occult reason which we do not know. We only guess at its existence from the record of Lord Hardwicke. At the time of this last scandal 'Sir Robert Walpole,' says the Chancellor, 'informed me of certain passages between the King and himself, and between the King and the Prince, of too high and secret a nature even to be trusted to this narrative; but from thence I found great reason to think that this unhappy difference between the King and Queen and His Royal Highness turned upon some points of a more interesting and important nature than have hitherto appeared.'[1] There, then, is the mystery, without a key, with no room even for conjecture. But the cause must have been dire that evoked so deadly a passion of hatred between parents and son.

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[1] Harris's Hardwicke, i. 382.

Those who care to read in detail the coarse and violent expressions of this unnatural repulsion may glut their appetite in Lord Hervey's memoirs. One or two such passages will serve as specimens of the rest. The Queen and Princess Caroline, Frederick's sister, made no ceremony of wishing a hundred times a day that the Prince might drop down dead of an apoplexy. Princess Caroline, who, Hervey tells us, 'had affability without meanness, dignity without pride, cheerfulness without levity, and prudence without falsehood,' who was in a word an exemplary and charming person, declared that she grudged him every hour he had to breathe, and reproached Hervey with being 'so great a dupe as to believe the nauseous beast' (those were her words) 'cared for anything but his own nauseous self, that he loved anything but money, that he was not the greatest liar that ever spoke.' The Queen, not to be outdone, declared that she would give it under her hand 'that my dear firstborn is the greatest ass, and the greatest liar, and the greatest canaille, and the greatest beast in the whole world, and that I most heartily wish he was out of it.'[1] Even on her deathbed she could not be brought to receive or forgive him. If Lord Hervey, his bitter enemy, can be credited, this obduracy was not at the last without justification. Lord Hervey declares that the Prince crowded the Queen's anteroom with his emissaries to convey to him the earliest information of her condition. As the bulletins of the Queen's decline reached him, he would say, 'Well, now we shall have some good news; she cannot hold out much longer.' All this need not be literally believed, but it affords a picture of family rancour which can scarcely have been equalled in the history of mankind.

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[1] These expressions are taken from Hervey's Memoirs.

From the time of the public quarrel with his parents the Prince of Wales gave himself up to political opposition. He wielded, indeed, formidable weapons of offence. His father was avaricious, secluded, and disliked; Frederick laid himself out to be thought generous, accessible, and popular. He knew well that every symptom of national affection for himself was a stab to the King. He and his family, at a time when French fashions were all the rage, ostentatiously wore none but English goods. He trained his children to act Addison's Cato. Nor did he disdain more social arts. He would go to fairs, bull-baitings, races, and rowing matches; he would visit gipsy encampments; he became familiar to the people. He would assist at a fire in London, amid shouts from the mob, as he and his court alleged, of 'Crown him! crown him!' At Epsom there is a tradition that when living there he fought a chimney-sweep with his fists, and erected a monument in generous acknowledgment of his own defeat.

In private life he was essentially frivolous. When his father's troops were besieging Carlisle, the Prince had a model of the citadel made in confectionery, while he and the ladies of the court bombarded it with sugar-plums. This seems emblematic of his whole career.

But his main and favourite diversion had a graver aspect: it lay in political cabals of which he was the puppet and the figurehead, and in forming futile ministries and policies for his own reign. Of these last a curious example is preserved among the Bedford Papers.[1]

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[1] Dated Feb. 8, 1748. Bedford Correspondence, i. 320.

All political malcontents of the slightest importance were sure of a cordial reception at Leicester House or Kew. There all could warm their wants and disappointments with the sunshine of royal patronage and the cheering prospect of a new reign. 'Remember that the King is sixty-one, and I am thirty-seven,'[1] said Frederick, and this calculation coloured his whole life. The future was freely discounted and anticipated in the Prince's circle, so that there, as in the Court of the Pretender, the faithful adherent might receive some high office to be enjoyed after the death of the King, but with this substantial difference: that whereas what James distributed were shadows, the awards of Frederick required only common good faith and the death of an old man to make them realities. Bubb for example, the most avid and unabashed of political harlots, gravely kissed his patron's hand for a Secretaryship of State, and, according to Walpole, a dukedom, immediately afterwards nominating his under-secretary, to show the solidity of the arrangement. Henley, who was afterwards under different circumstances to be Chancellor, was grievously disappointed to find that Dr. Lee was to have the seals. And so they snapped and snarled over the spoils, while the Prince complacently made his appointments, and apportioned the functions of the future. So far as he was concerned it was all barren enough. His little projects, his little ambitions, his little ministries, his political post-obits, were all cut short by the sudden shears of Death. His councillors and followers were scattered to the winds, and Bubb had to hasten to make his peace with the powers that be, and to exchange his contingent Secretaryship of

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[1] Marchmont Papers, i. 84.

State for an actual Treasurership of the Navy. The Prince's other post-obits, his debts, were, it would seem, never paid.[1]

To sum up, with regard to Frederick we have a few certain facts: the hatred of his parents and sisters, and a singular unanimity of scorn from his contemporaries. There is not perhaps in existence a single favourable testimony. We have many portraits, one at Windsor of an innocent lad in a red coat playing the violoncello with his sisters, which is pleasant enough; the later ones all stamped with a pretentious silliness which affirms the verdict of his own day. Then we have the mysterious intimation of Lord Hardwicke of some deep and sinister cause for the alienation of his parents. This, however, unsupported and unexplained, carries us no further, and is merely an excuse for the unnatural aversion of his family. Beyond that mystery, the word 'fatuous' seems exactly to embody all that we know of this prince; his appearance, morals, manners, and intellect are all summed up in that single expression.

On the other hand, there are traits of generosity which are recorded, there is his apparent popularity, there is the general grief for his death; but it may well be surmised that it was not difficult for the son of George II. and the grandson of George I. to be popular and regretted. On the whole, may we not conclude that the arbitrary discipline of Hanover in early life made him incurably tricky and untruthful, that he was an empty and frivolous coxcomb, but not without kindly instincts; and that his weaknesses and frailties, whatever they may have been, laid a grave responsibility on the parents who reared and cursed him?

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[1] Lord Dover's note to H. Walpole's letter of March 21, 1751.

CHAPTER VII.

DURING his first session of Parliament, Pitt never opened his mouth: indeed, his only public performance was to tell in a division. In 1736 he became better known. He supported an address of congratulation to the Crown on the marriage of the Prince of Wales. This formal and complimentary speech has been absurdly scrutinised because of the speaker's subsequent fame, and much has been read into it which no impartial reader can now discern. A notorious eulogy describes it as superior even to the models of ancient eloquence. Others read into it piercing innuendoes and vitriolic sarcasm. All this was discovered, long after its delivery, by the light of Pitt's later achievements. It is said that George II. never forgave it. But George II.'s hatred of Pitt is more easily accounted for by other offences. It is rumoured that Walpole shuddered when he heard it, and said, 'We must muzzle that terrible cornet of horse.' The ordinary reader sees in the reported speech nothing which would provoke admiration or alarm in anybody were it attributed to any one who had remained obscure. But the report, though elaborate, was probably inaccurate; the speech may have been more vicious than appears; it must, at any rate, have been something very different from smooth platitudes on a royal marriage that would have made Walpole tremble, if indeed Walpole was liable to any such emotion. The truth, no doubt, is that the graces of voice, person, and delivery marvellously embellished this maiden effort, and produced a striking effect on the audience.

But, whatever its intrinsic merits, the success of this speech was immeasurably enhanced, if not altogether secured, by Walpole's action. It may indeed be said to have been made famous by the penalty which followed it rather than by its own merits. He deprived the young orator and cornet of his commission.

> 'The servile standard from the freeborn hand
> He took, and bade thee lead the patriot band,'

sang Lyttelton to Pitt.

It was a vindictive act which seems alien to Walpole's boisterous good humour, but of a kind to which Walpole's arbitrary notions of political discipline made him singularly prone. So petty an act of vengeance wreaked on so young and subordinate an officer by a powerful Prime Minister seems incredible in our larger or laxer days. But it was perhaps the very slightness of Pitt's position which was an inducement to Walpole. He was determined, it may be, that the whole army, from the highest to the lowest, should feel the weight of his hand. The disgrace of political generals seemed just and proper, it was cutting off the heads of the tallest poppies, a proceeding recognised and respectable since the days of Tarquin. These penalties had left the mass of the army unmoved, not impossibly because the removal of chiefs means the promotion of subordinates. So Walpole may have resolved that all in the service of the Crown should feel that revolt against the minister of the Crown was a flagrant crime. Generals had been punished, and so all officers from the highest to the lowest should be liable to the same pains and penalties; nay private soldiers, were their lot enviable, might suffer the same deprivation. 'The King,' wrote Lady Irwin, a lady of the Prince of Wales' household, to her brother, Lord Carlisle, 'two days ago turned out Mr. Pitt from a cornetcy for having voted and spoke in Parliament contrary to his approbation. He is a young man of no fortune, a very pretty speaker, one the Prince is particular to, and under the tuition of my Lord Cobham. The Army is all alarmed at this, and 'tis said it will hurt the King more than his removing my Lord Stairs and Lord Cobham, since it is making the whole army dependent, by descending to resent a vote from the lowest commission, which may occasion a representation in parliament to prevent all officers of the army from sitting there.'[1]

It may, however, have been that Pitt's dismissal was due not to his obscurity but to an exactly opposite consideration.

Pitt's nephew, Lord Camelford, asserts as an undoubted fact that the reputation both of Pitt and of Lyttelton was so considerable before they entered Parliament, and their political tendencies so notorious, that Walpole made considerable offers to Thomas Pitt on condition that he did not bring them in for any of his boroughs. 'William's early abilities,' writes Lord Camelford, 'induc'd Sir Robert Walpole to offer my father (Thomas Pitt) any terms not to bring him or his brother-in-law Mr. Lyttelton into Parliament,' but 'my father preferred their interests to his own, and laid the foundations, at his own expense, for all his brother's future fame and greatness.' It is a tradition that Canning, when in office, kept his eye on promising lads at Eton who might make eligible followers. One would not, however, have imagined that Walpole was so much in touch with the rising youth of the country. But if Camelford may be credited, and there seems no reason to doubt him, Walpole was prejudiced and on his guard against Pitt before Pitt opened his mouth; and he may have been hurried into a petulant act by previous friction unconnected with the speech, which may, moreover, have contained irritating innuendoes directed against Walpole, which Walpole alone understood.

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[1] Carlisle Papers (Hist. MSS.), 172.

The Minister had not been so foolish as to alienate without trying to secure, and his failure may have exasperated him the more. In later years Pitt told Shelburne that Sir Robert had offered him the troop which was afterwards given to Conway, so that had he remained in the army he would have stood high by seniority alone. This offer, we may conjecture, was just previous to the overtures to Thomas Pitt. Walpole, hearing reports of the young officer's conspicuous abilities and of his hostility to the Government, would try and fix his ambitions in the army. Failing that, he would try and exclude him from Parliament. And failing all pacific overtures, he would try different methods. It is possible, and even probable, that expressions passed during the negotiations which left a sting. But it now seems clear that no young private member, without means or influence, ever caused such active disquietude.

There is yet another, and, perhaps, a simpler reason. Pitt, as we have seen, had become identified with the fortunes and party of Cobham, who was Walpole's bitter enemy. Conciliation having been found futile, the Minister determined that the young soldier should suffer the same penalty as the old general. The old gamecock had lost his spurs, so should the young cockerel. If Pitt were so devoted to Cobham, he should have the gratification of sharing Cobham's martyrdom. Cobham had lost his regiment; Pitt should lose his commission. In striking Pitt he would also wound Cobham. So the removal was carried out in a spirit of pettiness which was criticised at the time, and seems incredible to posterity. 'At the end of the session,' says Hervey, 'Cornet Pitt was broke for this, which was a measure at least ill-timed if not ill-taken;' which he explained by saying that if done at all it should have been done immediately on his speech. Hervey, though an ardent Walpolian, evidently thought the whole proceeding was disproportionate to the offender and the offence. But the result of the intended disgrace was, we are told, immediate popularity. Pitt after his dismissal drove about the country in a one-horse chaise without a servant, and everywhere the people gathered round him with enthusiasm.[1]

Pitt took the matter philosophically. 'I should not be a little vain,' he writes, 'to be the object of the hatred of a minister, hated even by those who call themselves his friends.'[2] But to his slender means the loss of his pay was not unimportant, and this fact perhaps explains his accepting an office ill-suited to his temperament. In September 1737, the Prince of Wales, in consequence of his crazy and insolent conduct at the time of his wife's confinement, was ordered to leave St. James' Palace. He

[1] Seward, ii. 362.

[2] Lady Suffolk's Letters, ii. 151.

retired first to Kew, and then to Norfolk House in St. James' Square, which thus became the birthplace of George III. The King's displeasure also caused some resignations in the Prince's household; and, smarting under this disgrace, Frederick found it no doubt agreeable to take advantage of these vacancies to attach to his household two active young members of the Opposition, whose appointment would be profoundly distasteful to his father. Few could be more repugnant to the King than Pitt, the ex-cornet, and Lyttelton his seconder. Moreover, Pitt was already intimate and influential with the Prince.[1] So Lyttelton became private secretary to Frederick, and Pitt a groom of his bedchamber. These appointments would, in the ordinary course, be submitted for the sanction of the King, but the alienation between father and son was so acute that it is probable that no communication was made. Pitt held this post for seven years, resigning it in 1744; and the salary was no doubt of sensible assistance to his meagre income during this period.

Pitt's second speech (in 1737) was also on the Prince of Wales's affairs. George II., who lost no opportunity of displaying publicly his hatred to his son, and who as Prince of Wales had received a fixed income of 100,000*l.* a year, gave the Prince on his marriage an allowance at pleasure of 50,000*l.* The Prince, who owed his father but scant duty and affection, was persuaded by his advisers to apply to Parliament for the same annuity that his father, when in his situation, had received. This proceeding violently incensed the King; but he was induced to send an official message to his son, promising to convert the present voluntary allowance into a fixed income, and to settle some provision on the Princess. The Prince replied that the matter was now out of his hands. The offer, in effect, was not particularly alluring, as the allowance could never have been withdrawn, and a settlement on the Princess ought to have been made at the time of her marriage. It is indeed difficult, given the circumstances, to blame Frederick's unfilial conduct in this matter. He had a colourable claim to an income double that which was given him by the King; the King had ampler means of paying it than had been possessed by George I.; and the Prince had nothing to hope from the unconstrained bounty of his father; he was indeed under his father's ban. So the motion was brought before the House, and Pitt made a speech, which Thackeray, his insipid biographer, declares to have been most masterly, but which is nowhere preserved. We know nothing of it, but it is safe to presume that it was a good speech. These efforts and his household appointment made him a prominent figure in the Prince's party. He was beginning to be talked about. He had been sneered at by the Government paper, the 'Gazetteer,' and defended by Bolingbroke's organ, the 'Craftsman.' This seems the first glimmering of his note, and is therefore worthy of remark. Nothing is so difficult as to trace in a biography the several degrees by which eminence has been reached; seldom are the slow degrees of the ladder recorded. Here it is at least possible to mark the first and second steps. The first event that brought Pitt into notice was the deprivation of his commission: the second indication of his growing power is apparent in the laboured sneers of the 'Gazetteer' at the young man's long neck and slender body, for it would not have been worth while to direct these gibes against one who was not formidable.

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[1] Hervey, ii. 195.

Pitt's next speech was less successful. It was in support of a reduction of the standing army from 17,400 to 12,000. The contention seems almost incredible when it is considered that Pitt and his party were calling on the ministry to avenge the ill-treatment of British subjects by Spain. But, however inconsistent, it was probably deemed a popular move. Jealousy and dislike of standing armies was still strong among the people. Lord Hervey had told the Queen in 1735, 'that there was certainly nothing so odious to men of all ranks and classes in this country as troops,' and that 'as a standing army was the thing in the world that was most disliked in this country, so the reduction of any part of it was a measure that always made any prince more popular than any other he could take.'[1] Walpole had then maintained that the army should never be reduced below 18,000 men in view of the constant menace of the disputed succession, the turbulent character of the nation, and the necessity of a strong position in foreign affairs.[2] In this debate of 1738 he took much the same line. This sane view, as it was the policy of the Minister, was furiously combated by the young bloods of the Opposition. Lyttelton did not shrink from using the childish argument that a standing army weakened us abroad, as it made foreign governments believe that there must be violent dissensions in the country which it was kept to control. A taunt had in the course of debate been levelled at placemen; and Pitt, as a member of the Prince's household, vindicated the independence of officials, directing as he passed a shaft at the three hundred thick or thin supporters of the Government who were always so singularly unanimous on all political questions. The army, he said, was the chief cause of the national discontents, and yet these discontents were alleged as the chief cause for maintaining the army. Then he made the criticism so familiar to English public men even now, that the army cost three times as much proportionally to its size as the armies of France and Germany. On the question of disbanding troops, he took a strangely unsympathetic line. The officers would be put on half-pay, which was as high as full-pay elsewhere. And as for the private soldiers, 'I must think,' he said, 'they have no claim for any greater reward than the pay they have already received, nor should I think we were guilty of the least ingratitude if they were all turned adrift to-morrow morning.'[1] Pitt, it was obvious, had some distance to compass before he should become a popular leader. That he should have pressed at all for the reduction of the small standing army in the midst of an irresistible clamour for war is another proof of the heedless rhetoric of ambitious youth.

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[1] Hervey, ii. 80.

[2] Ib. ii. 82.

While the young patriots were thus endeavouring to reduce the army, war was brewing with Spain. Our traders were constantly encroaching on her rights and monopolies in the New World. There was a perpetual smuggling invasion of the Spanish settlements in America on the part of the British, and a rigorous defence by right of search on the part of the Spaniards. There can be little doubt that the British merchants were in the wrong. But trade has neither conscience nor bowels, and monopolies of commerce are the fair quarry of the freebooting merchant.

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[1] Parl. Hist. x. 464–7.

The Spaniards, on their side, were not delicate or merciful in exercising their undoubted right of search; so our countrymen, to conceal their own infractions of treaty and to stir up hostility to Spain, spared no methods or exertions to rouse popular indignation against their enemies. Little less than the tortures of the Inquisition were alleged. 'Seventy of our brave sailors are now in chains in Spain! our countrymen in chains and slaves to the Spaniards!' exclaimed an enthusiastic alderman: 'is not this enough to fire the coldest?'[1] The notorious Jenkins now appeared on the scene with an ear in cotton-wool, which he alleged to have been torn from his head by a Spaniard, with an intimation that the mutilator would gladly serve our King in the same way. Alderman Beckford, who brought Jenkins forward, afterwards declared that if any member had lifted up Jenkins's wig, he would have found both ears whole and complete.[2] Others averred that though he had lost his ear, he had lost it in the pillory.

The Spaniards, not to be outdone, recorded the sufferings of two of their nobles, who, captured by our British filibusters, had been compelled to devour their own noses.[3] It was alleged, too, that English pirates swarmed, and that Spaniards were publicly sold as slaves in British colonies.[4] But these allegations, though probably neither more nor less veracious than the others, had no currency in England, while the story of the suffering Jenkins ran through England like wildfire. A bombastic utterance was coined for him by some political Tadpole, and rang through the land. None cared to inquire into the right or the wrong of the imprisonments, or to investigate the other side of the question, and there were none to present it if they did. 'Britons in Spanish prisons' was a sufficient cry, and swept the nation off its feet. Walpole, always too contemptuous of popular passion, had presented to Parliament a convention with Spain, which regulated most of the points at issue between them, except that which lay nearest the heart of his people, the right of search; and his brother Horace moved, in a long and laudatory speech, an address of thanks to the Crown for this agreement. This roused the Prince's young men. Lyttelton, indeed, spoke ostentatiously as the Prince's mouthpiece. 'I know who hears me,' he said, alluding to his master's presence in the gallery, 'and for that reason I speak.'[1] Pitt and Grenville also spoke, and they are described in a contemporary account as 'three or four young gentlemen who took great personal liberties.' Another letter says that Pitt 'spoke very well, but very abusively.' However imperfectly his speech may be reported, it has much of that energy of declamatory invective which is part of the tradition connected with his name. Of this the peroration is a sufficient example. 'This convention, Sir, I think from my heart is nothing but a stipulation for national ignominy; an illusory expedient to baffle the resentment of the nation; a truce without a suspension of hostilities on the part of Spain; on the part of England, a suspension, as to Georgia, of the first law of nature, self-preservation and self-defence; a surrender of the right of England to the mercy of plenipotentiaries; and in this infinitely highest and sacred point, future security, not only inadequate, but directly repugnant to the resolutions of Parliament, and the gracious promise from the throne. The complaints of your despairing merchants, the voice of England have condemned it. Be the guilt of it on the adviser. God forbid that the Committee should share the guilt by approving it.'[1] This was undoubtedly the first speech in which Pitt made a real mark as an orator, and of this a proof remains in the fact that it is recorded that Sir R. Walpole took notes of it as it proceeded.[2]

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[1] Coxe's Sir R. Walpole, i. 575

[2] Life of Shelburne, i. 46.

[3] Coxe's Sir R. Walpole, i. 580 note.

[4] See Temperley's Essay on the causes of this war in Trans. of Royal Hist. Soc. Series II. vol. iii. p. 207.

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[1] Parl. Hist. x. 1284.

The debate and its unsuccessful division were followed by that abortive and disastrous form of protest known as a secession. Wyndham announced it in a speech of solemn acrimony. It failed, as all such secessions do. It has been said by a veteran politician that 'a secession of a party from parliament is so obvious a failure in both duty and prudence that a benevolent looker-on will always recommend to the seceder to get to his place as well and as fast as he can.'[3] A secession does not appeal to the country, which regards it as an exhibition of baffled ill-temper, while it leaves the House at the mercy of the Ministry. This retirement of his enemies was therefore hailed by Walpole as an unexpected stroke of good fortune. Prompt repentance, as usual, overtook the seceders, and the usual difficulty as to returning with dignity and consistency. In November they had to slink back without much of either.

It is not easy to discover whether Pitt was among the seceders, though it seems improbable, as Lyttelton, one of his closest allies, remained to repeat the strange parallel contention of the Opposition that the army should be reduced and war declared against Spain.

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[1] Parl. Hist. x. 1280–3.

[2] Coxe's Sir R. Walpole, i. 594 note.

[3] Marchmont Papers, ii. 180, note by Rose.

The national wish for war was at any rate soon gratified. Though Walpole had carried resolutions approving of his convention, the growing fury of the nation could not be dammed by his meagre majority of twenty-eight. When the negotiations between Spain and Great Britain were resumed, Spain absolutely refused to abandon the right of search. To the English this was the main point, and Walpole knew that war was now inevitable. Whether he as minister could or should, in spite of his convictions, carry it out was another matter. He decided that he could, and war was declared on October 29, 1739.

The enthusiasm of the nation was frantic. The heralds, on proceeding to the city to read the formal declaration, were attended by a great procession. The Prince of Wales did not disdain to take part in it, or to pause at Temple Bar to drink a public toast to the war. All the church bells of the capital were set ringing. The Minister, as he heard the clang, bitterly remarked that they might ring the bells now, but that they would soon wring their hands. This is a truth that may be uttered with justice at the beginning of all hostilities, and in this case there were many opportunities for wringing hands; for, with the exception of the truce of Aix-la-Chapelle, Britain was not at peace from now (1739) till 1763. But Walpole's cynical pun did not embody the spirit which gives confidence to a nation, or in which a great Minister would begin a just or necessary war. Walpole was, no doubt, convinced that this one was neither just nor necessary. Moreover, he hated all war as a needless complication which deranged finance and held out prospects and opportunities for a Pretender. He knew, too, that he was a Minister of peace, and that he was not likely to shine in war. He had indeed been Secretary at War, but then he had the guarantee of a Marlborough in the field; his function had been to serve and supply a supreme captain. But there was nothing now to give him the same confidence. He felt, he knew that he was out of place as a director of wars. Close to him, unsuspected as yet, was the must successful War Minister that this country has ever seen. For on the benches over against him sate Pitt, who was to revel in warfare and find his true vocation in directing it; but his time was not come. Afterwards, when it had arrived, he was to repent and recant his opposition on this occasion, and pay homage to Walpole. None, indeed, of the leaders in opposition to Walpole attempted afterwards to justify their conduct in this business.

That Minister meanwhile moodily prepared to carry out the wishes of the country, and no doubt excused himself for his humiliating compliance by the thought that if he did not some one else would, with less economy and more danger to the State. He is said to have tendered his resignation, but even were this true it could only be, in view of the King's relations to himself and the Opposition, a matter of form. He uttered his own self-condemnation: 'I dare not do what is right.'

But his submission, whether accompanied or not by a feigned resignation, availed him nothing; his unpopularity seemed rather to increase than diminish. The nation suspected his good faith. The legion of able and brilliant men whom he had alienated were in no ways appeased, but more ruthless in their determination to hunt him to the death; the multitude effervesced in mobs. Soon they were all in full cry. There was another general election in 1741, when the Prince of Wales with lavish subsidies entered actively into the strife. Parliament, dissolved in April, met in December, thirsty for Walpole's political blood.

The inglorious course of the war in the meantime, its delays and disasters, forms no part of Pitt's life. One may wonder in passing at the callous wickedness that sent out raw boys and decrepit pensioners to die of fever and exhaustion, or at the strange fortune by which those who prepare such expeditions, ministers, commissaries, contractors, and the like, escape the gallows. Walpole at any rate did not escape the particular fate that he deserved. A year of glowing and successful war might yet have saved him; a year of failure and calamity fixed his doom.

He had held on to the last possible moment, and so fell with little of grace or dignity. An inevitable political catastrophe only becomes more overwhelming by delay; each day that a minister remains in power against the will of the nation adds force to the torrent against him. Moreover, he affronted public opinion by receiving unusual favours from the King when he had become the object of popular execration. Here the coarse fibre which had stood him in such good stead during a hundred fights did him disservice, for it hindered his perception of the fact that it is unwise to be conspicuously decorated at a moment when the nation is calling for your head. He held on, with failing health but unfailing courage, though the war had furnished him with a reasonable door of departure at the critical moment when honour permitted and indeed required him to go, and though his friends had implored him to resign. The motives for his obstinacy were obvious enough. His was a doughty soul, and did not yield without agony. But there was a more practical reason. He believed that, as had long been threatened, his fall would be followed by his impeachment. As soon as he resigned, his brother Horace hurried off to burn his papers. Walpole himself took a similar precaution. This shows their sense of the imminence of the danger which had always impended over him, and which was first in their thoughts when the protection of office was about to be withdrawn.

The final scene in the House of Commons was dramatic enough, and must have been in the mind of Disraeli when he penned his description of the fall of Peel. As the fatal division on the Chippenham election was proceeding, the Minister sate and watched the hostile procession with unfailing and imperturbable humour. He beckoned to his side Bayntun Rolt, the Chippenham candidate supported by the Opposition, and so their nominal champion, and gave him a reasoned catalogue of many of the members voting against him, detailing their ingratitude and treachery, as well as the exact favours that he had heaped on them. 'Young man, I will tell you the history of all your friends as they come in; that fellow I saved from the gallows, and that from starvation; this other one's sons I promoted,' and so forth;[1] then passing on through this bitter recital to his scornful conclusion, he declared that never again would he set foot in that House.[2]

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[1] Life of Shelburne, i. 37. Seward's Anecdotes, ii. 309.

[2] Coxe's Sir R. Walpole, i. 695.

He fell with the skill and presence of mind which never deserted him, for in everything except office he remained victorious. All parties had combined to destroy Walpole, and in their triumph all not unnaturally expected to see every vestige of the detested administration swept away in his defeat. Vast was their disappointment. Newcastle, the oldest of the old gang, to use the vivid expression of modern politics, had long scented the approaching catastrophe of his chief, and had been preparing to lessen the shock to himself and his friends, so far as was possible, by judicious conference with the Opposition.

Newcastle has long been a byeword ; he was so all through his protracted public life ; and he has remained in history a synonym for a certain jobbing and fussing incapacity. Justice has, perhaps, been scarcely done to his laborious life ; his disinterestedness about money, rare in any age, especially in that ; above all to his unequalled capacity for remaining in office, a virtue not unappreciated by the great mass of politicians. Nor was he a fool, though he was something of a coward. A man who could hold the seals of Secretary of State for thirty continuous years of stress and intrigue, who filled high office for forty-five years in succession, could not be without invaluable qualities for steering with persistence and astuteness through intricacies of parliamentary navigation. His ambition, such as it was, had indeed an elastic but stubborn tenacity ; the ties of blood, friendship, or principle availed nothing against it. His industry, such as it was, is attested by his long tenure of office and the vast mass of his correspondence. His disinterestedness, such as it was, is proved by his leaving public life 300,000*l.* poorer than he entered it, and by his nevertheless refusing a pension offered him by George III. on his retirement, a circumstance almost unique in the annals of the century. In nothing else was he disinterested. His only taste in private life seems to have been for the pleasures of the table and the consequent art of the physician. On his resignation in 1756 he attempted indeed to assume the air of a retired country squire. Guns and gaiters were procured, but getting his feet wet he hurriedly abandoned the sports of the field and with them the appearance of rural absorption. This illustrates his crowning defect. In all that he did he was supremely ridiculous.

> 'Behind him close behold Newcastle's Grace,
> Haste in his step and absence in his face;
>
> * * * *
>
> Tho' void of honesty, of sense, of art,
> A foolish head and a perfidious heart,
> Yet riches, honours, power he shall enjoy.'[1]

Foote and Smollett have left vivid caricatures of his ludicrous personality. The story of his conference with Pitt when Pitt was in bed with the gout, and of his getting into a vacant bed and discoursing from thence to his colleague, is one of the choicest pictures of his absurdity that survive. The two leading Ministers were found storming at each other from adjacent couches, disputing as to whether Hawke's fleet should put to sea or not.[2] Pitt fortunately prevailed. Newcastle's grotesqueness was part of his temperament, for all through his life his jealousy and suspicion kept him in a perpetual froth of nervous excitement. His jealousy was of power, his suspicion of those who aimed at it. And by power he meant patronage. Throughout his long life his god or goddess was patronage. Indeed his voluminous correspondence rather resembles the letter-bag of an agency for necessitous persons of social position than the papers of a Prime Minister or Secretary of State. To hold a crowded levee of placehunters, ecclesiastical and temporal, to thread his way about it coaxing, fawning, and slobbering, embracing and even kissing, promising and paying all with the base coin of cozenage, this was Newcastle's paradise. But it answered. It made him necessary to his party, and therefore necessary to those who would govern the country; for government was restricted to his party. So all statesmen in turn scorned and employed him. 'His name,' said Walpole, 'is perfidy.' But perfidy paid, and Walpole kept him to the end, fully aware that he was always ready for betrayal if expediency dictated it, and that in the closing months he was in fact busy at the work. At last, indeed, Walpole himself, under the name of the King, commissioned him to intrigue officially. Hardwicke, perhaps the greatest of our Chancellors, who furnished the brains for Newcastle, and condescended to act as his mentor and instrument, was joined with him to make terms with the enemy, and offer the reversion of the Treasury on condition of immunity for Walpole.

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[1] Sir C. H. Williams, ii. 140–1.

[2] Dutens' Voyage, &c., i. 142.

Pulteney was the enemy, or its chief; for he led the Opposition, and guided the Court of the Heir Apparent, as he had that of the father when Prince of Wales, though then without fruit and result. He was also the idol of the nation. For long years he had made the people believe that Walpole was a Goliath of corruption, and that he was the incorruptible David. Moreover, his vast wealth, his ability, his eloquence, and his social qualities gave him a personal ascendancy apart from his political position. 'He was, by all accounts,' writes Shelburne, 'the greatest House of Commons orator that had ever appeared,'[1] surpassing even the legendary reputation of Bolingbroke; he was also a scholar, a wit, and a potent pamphleteer. In conversation he excelled; when the wits were gathered at Stowe, the pre-eminence of Pulteney was acknowledged.[2] At this moment he was supreme, 'in the greatest point of view,' writes Chesterfield, 'that I ever saw any subject in . . . . the arbiter between the Crown and the people; the former imploring his protection, the latter his support;' 'possessing,' says Glover, 'a degree of popularity and power which no subject before him was ever possessed of.' All eyes were raised to him with expectant adoration as he stood on this pinnacle, and as they gazed they saw him slowly totter, and then fall headlong. For the two Ministers had succeeded in compromising him. He refused, indeed, amnesty for Walpole or office for himself; but adulterated these refusals by watering his expressions of hostility to the Minister, and by asking on his own behalf for an earldom and a seat in the Cabinet. When his followers found that he and Carteret were engaged in secret negotiation with Ministers, their indignation was unbounded. They held a public meeting to disown him. His popularity disappeared in an instant and for ever. He afterwards averred that he had lost his head, that there was no comprehending or describing the confusion that prevailed, and that he was obliged to go out of town for three or four days to keep his senses. This is not impossible or even improbable. A political crisis bursts like a tornado, and bewilders the strongest characters. Both rare and happy are the men who can on such occasions take counsel with themselves, and meet the storm with presence of mind. Pulteney had, perhaps, become enervated with a long period of merely negative opposition. Glover also asserts that his hand was forced by Lyttelton who was secretly offering terms to Walpole, and that these, though tendered by the Prince of Wales's Secretary, Walpole treated with disdain. Glover was an ill-conditioned wasp, and his story refutes itself. For the one person whom Walpole was anxious to gain was Frederick, even offering to add 50,000*l.* to his income. That he should then have spurned an overture from the Prince's right-hand man is out of the question; he would have met it more than half-way. Whatever the cause, Pulteney, having committed himself, could not retrace his steps; an iron grip constrained him. In vain did he seek to recall his patent and escape his peerage. Walpole held him fast. Pulteney had finally conquered in the long struggle of twenty years, and overthrown Sir Robert; but the prostrate Minister had from the dust worked Pulteney like a marionette.

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[1] Life of Shelburne, i. 45.

[2] Bishop Newton's Works, i. 93.

For behind all these strange scenes Walpole pulled the strings. His main object was to avoid his own impeachment, and this, in spite of the determination of the hostile majority which called for his head, he achieved; a feat little less than miraculous. The Tory candidates for office were rejected by the King, and as for the not less bitter Whigs, as

'. . . . bees, on flowers alighting, cease to hum,
So, settling upon places, Whigs grow dumb.'

They were dumb in spite of themselves. The nation, which had been excited by the hope of seeing corruption extinguished, and the advent of a new era of virtue and public spirit, was again disappointed. People saw this sublime struggle result in a jobbing distribution of such places as were vacated to the same sort of people as had vacated them, with precisely the same system. It was much the same ministry without the one great minister. Fooled once more, as so often before and since, people shrugged their shoulders, and turned their attention to other things, more honest and more practical than party politics.

With the fall of Walpole this narrative is not otherwise concerned, for his successors found no post for Pitt. Two members of the Prince of Wales's household, Lords Baltimore and Archibald Hamilton, had found acceptance as members of the new administration; the King probably could not stomach more, certainly not Pitt. For long years afterwards he could not endure contact with the orator who sneered at him and at Hanover, and who even insinuated with factious injustice doubts of his personal courage. It must also be remembered that Pitt was not merely attached to the party of the Prince but to the group of Cobham. That veteran accepted for a short time a seat in the Cabinet and the command of a regiment. But his animosity against Carteret was second only to his animosity against Walpole. Carteret was a powerful, and aimed at being the controlling member of the new Government. He therefore succeeded to the position of target for the barbed arrows of Pitt and his friends which had been vacated by Walpole's retirement. Carteret, the new object of philippic, had striven hard for the succession to Walpole when Pulteney stood aside, but had been foiled by Walpole acting through the King. Lord Wilmington, whom Horace Walpole describes as a solemn debauchee and Hervey as fond only of money and eating, but who was the favourite nonentity of George II., had been fobbed off upon the party as First Minister; and the choice had its advantages. For, always incapable, he was now moribund; and so as a feeble and transient barrier to ambition was the least unacceptable to Walpole's expectant heirs. A figurehead, moreover, was the favourite expedient of the century for skirting the fierce conflict of personalities.

So Wilmington reigned, and Carteret governed for a while in Walpole's stead. The shadowy form of the First Minister could not veil for a moment the bold outline of the Secretary of State, for Carteret, though scarcely attaining real greatness, remains one of the most brilliant and striking figures in the eighteenth century. It is almost enough to say that in all but disregard of money he was the exact antipodes of Newcastle. No man of his time was so splendidly equipped for the highest public service as Carteret. He was sprung from an ancient Norman family settled in Jersey, eight of whom, the father and seven sons, were knighted in one day by Edward III.[1] To a person of commanding beauty and an open and engaging demeanour, he united superb qualities of intellect developed by ardent study. He was a scholar of signal excellence at a time when scholarship was in the atmosphere of English statesmanship, the best Grecian of his day, with the great classics always in his mind and at command. Did any one of the like taste come to him on business, Carteret would at once turn from business to some Homeric discussion. Moreover he knew the whole Greek Testament by heart; an unusual and unsuspected accomplishment.[1] But he was also versed in modern languages, then a rare and never a common faculty in this island, and alone among his compeers spoke German fluently, a priceless advantage under a sovereign whose heart and mind were in Hanover. He was the only person who was in favour both with the King and with the Prince of Wales.[2] He abounded in a wit at once genial and penetrating. He was a puissant orator. His comprehensive grasp of European statecraft, his capacity for taking broad and high views, his soaring politics, his intrepid spirit and his high ambition, marked him out among the meaner men by whom he was surrounded. His contempt of money amounted to recklessness. His scorn of all pettiness made him disdain jobbery, and even the subtler arts of parliamentary manipulation. There was much that was sublime in him, and more that was impracticable. In a greater degree than any other minister of his time, if we except Chatham, with whom he had many qualities in common, does he seem to partake of the mystery of genius. Unfortunately, his energy came in gusts, he could scarcely bring himself to bend, and he was incapable of that self-contained patience, amounting to long-suffering, which is a necessary condition of the highest success in official life. All, indeed, was marred by an extravagance of conduct which was in reality the result of his nature running riot and of his good qualities carried to excess. He played his political chess with the big pieces alone, and neglected the pawns. He disregarded not merely the soldiers and most of the officers, but all the arts and equipment of the parliamentary army, heedless of the fact that parliamentary support is the vital necessity of a British minister. Disdainful of public opinion or party connections, he attempted to play the great game in Europe with no resource but his own abilities and the confidence of his sovereign, whose antipathy to France he shared, and whose policy and prejudices he could discuss in the King's native language. And yet over the bottle, which he loved at least as much as literature or politics, he would laugh at the whole business and the men with whom he was engaged. 'What is it to me,' he would say, 'who is a judge or who is a bishop? It is my business to make Kings and Emperors'; and he would have to be reminded that those who wanted offices or honours would follow and support those who did deal in those commodities. One can hear his jolly laugh. His policy he embodied in one striking sentence: 'I want to instil a nobler ambition into you, to make you knock the heads of the Kings of Europe together, and jumble something out of it which may be of service to this country.' As a matter of fact though he did undoubtedly knock together the heads of some kings, no material advantage resulted to the country. He was, however, a patriot, a single-minded, able, jovial, reckless patriot, but out of touch with the politicians, unsuited to parliamentary government, and so almost ineffectual. And thus we see him at his best on his deathbed, where he quotes to the under-secretary who brought him the Treaty of Paris for approval the speech of Sarpedon with melancholy emphasis. 'Friend of my soul, were we to escape from this war, and then live for ever without old age or death, I should not fight myself among the foremost, nor would I send thee into the glorifying battle; but a thousand fates of death stand over us, which mortal man may not flee from and avoid; then let us on.' These last words he repeated with calm and determined resignation, and after a pause of some minutes desired the preliminary articles of the Peace of Paris to be read to him. After hearing these at length he desired that, to use own words, the approbation of a dying statesman might be declared to the most glorious war and the most honourable peace that this nation ever saw.[1] The news of his extremity had reached Chesterfield. 'When he dies,' wrote this shrewdest judge and observer of mankind in England, who had in his factious days called Carteret 'a wild and drunken minister,'[2] 'the ablest head in England dies too, take it for all in all.'[3]

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[1] Ballantyne's Carteret, 2.

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[1] Seward's Anecdotes, ii. 280.

[2] Marchmont Papers, i. 42, 73.

Pitt soon had an opportunity of showing that the selection of ministers from the Prince's household had left out the one priceless force. For now there came raining into Parliament imperative demands for the impeachment of the fallen Minister. These representations from the various constituencies to their several members are well worth consideration, for they emphasise identical demands with a unanimity suggestive of much later forms of political organization. They denounce Standing Armies, and Septennial Parliaments, asking that Triennial Parliaments, 'at least,' may be restored; they require that placemen largely, and pensioners entirely, shall be excluded from the House of Commons; and that laws shall be passed for the security and encouragement of the linen trade. In an even more sanguine spirit they stipulate for the extirpation of those party distractions 'which, though their foundations have long ceased to exist, were yet so industriously fomented among us, in order to serve the mischievous purposes of a ministerial tyranny.' But first and last, and above all, they insist on the punishment of Walpole, bringing him and his colleagues, which of course meant him, to 'condign punishment.' 'Nothing but the most rigorous justice ought to avenge an injured people. . . . justice is a duty we owe to posterity.' 'We have a right to speak plainly to you, and we must tell you, Sir, that if the man that ruined our trade, disgraced our arms, plundered our treasure, negotiated away our interests, impoverished the land—in a word, the author of all the disgraces and calamities of twenty years should (while the whole nation is calling out for justice against him) triumph in impunity, we shall be apt to think our constitution is lost.' 'Lenity to him would be cruelty to the nation.'[1] Our ancestors, it will be seen, did not wage their political warfare with the sweetmeats or roses of a carnival contest.

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[1] Wood's Essay on the Original Genius of Homer, p. vii. n. (Ed. 1775).

[2] Chesterfield, v. 65.

[3] Chesterfield's Letters, iv. 358.

It seems unnecessary to remark that of these various injunctions the only one to which the members of Parliament paid any heed was that for the prosecution or persecution of Walpole. Even here there was no result. The new officials were sated and at ease, the hungry remnant was insufficient or inept. But the constituencies were in deadly earnest, if their members were not. They had been goaded by their leaders to a state bordering on frenzy, and their demands, vindictive as they may appear to us, only embodied the declamation of the Opposition throughout half at least of Walpole's ministry. More than ten years before, Pulteney had publicly declared that 'the Opposition had come to a determined resolution not to listen to any treaty whatsoever, or from whomsoever it may come, in which the first and principal condition should not be to deliver him (Walpole) up to the justice of the country.' But now the Opposition was in power, and Pulteney was in a chastened and moderate mood. His star, indeed, was already on the wane; he was on the high road to the earldom of Bath and extinction. At the first meeting indeed with the King's envoys he had declared in a famous phrase that he could not screen Walpole if he would, for 'the heads of parties are like the heads of snakes, which are carried on by their tails.' But at a later conference he said, with reference to the same topic, that he was not a man of blood, and that in all his expressions importing a resolution to pursue the Minister to destruction he meant only the destruction of his power, not his person. He would consult with his friends, yet must confess that so many years of maladministration deserved some parliamentary censure.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xii. 416–427.

Accordingly Lord Limerick moved on March 9 (1742) for a select committee of inquiry into the administration of the late Sir Robert Walpole during the last twenty years; but Pulteney did not at first countenance this moderate measure. He was absent, on a reasonable excuse no doubt, and in his absence his friends intimated that it would not be disagreeable to him were the motion rejected.

This was, it seems, untrue, but it gave Pitt the first great opportunity of his life. When others were silenced by office or honours, he stood forth as the mouthpiece of the people and as the consistent, incorruptible maintainer of the policy and declarations of his party. It was an opportunity of which he availed himself with terrible effect. It is now, we think, that he first appealed to the imagination and confidence of the nation, as distinguished from the appreciation of Parliament, though that also was sufficiently marked. 'Pitt grows the most popular speaker in the House of Commons, and is at the head of his party,' writes Philip to Joseph Yorke.[1]

Owing to the absence, and so the presumed indifference or disapproval of Pulteney, Lord Limerick's motion was rejected by two votes. At the request of Pulteney, however, who, whether lukewarm or not, was nettled at the natural criticisms provoked by his attitude, Lord Limerick brought forward another motion of the same kind limited to the last ten years of Walpole's administration. Pulteney who, discredited outside, retained within the House 'a miraculous influence,' exerted himself to the utmost, we may be sure, but it can scarcely be doubted that the honours of the double debate rested with the vehement and untainted Pitt. It is not perhaps of much use to quote from the vague and imperfect reports of his speeches, but we can gather, at least, their general trend. One passage, at any rate, in his speech on the second motion, has been authentically preserved by Horace Walpole, for it was a compliment to himself. Horace had defended his father with a grace and filial duty that commended him to the House. Pitt, in reply, said that it was becoming in the young man to remember that he was the child of the accused, the House should remember that they were the children of their country, a flight which seems to outstep the perilous limits of the sublime.

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[1] Harris, ii. 31.

From the summary of Pitt's two speeches we may at least gather that he had much the best of the argument on this issue, so long dead and buried. One noteworthy point, however, in his declamation against the Minister, is that he paid vindictive attention to Walpole's practice of dismissing and cashiering his opponents, by which he had himself suffered. He argued that the King might as well dispose of all the property of his subjects as of that particular form of property represented by commissions in the army; which, whether obtained by service or by purchase, were as freehold as an estate, and should be as amply secured.[1]

But, in truth, his denunciation of Walpole is much less remarkable than the poisoned shafts which, as is manifest even in the faulty report, he aimed at the King, or at Hanover, which was much the same thing. He declared that the changes were unreal, that Walpole remained Minister behind the scenes. 'Though he be removed from the Treasury,' said Pitt, 'he is not from the King's closet, nor probably will be, unless by our advice or by our sending him to a lodging at the other end of the town, where he cannot do so much harm to his country.'[2] This pointed hint at the Tower must have been greatly to the taste of his audience. Allusions to the debts of the Civil List, caused certainly not by hospitality or by expenditure on any public object, but inferentially by corruption, were artfully framed so as to cause the King the greatest possible annoyance;[1] so, too, were the innuendoes as to our foreign policy having been framed in the sole interests of Hanover. Lord Limerick's second motion was carried by seven votes, and Pitt was named on the secret committee, which, however, owing to the loyal silence of Walpole's associates, to the placing one of them in the privileged security of the House of Lords, and to the refusal of the King to allow disclosures as to the manner in which secret service money had been employed, came to a futile and inglorious end. We catch one glimpse of Pitt in its proceedings. Scrope, the doughty old Secretary of the Treasury, who had fought under Monmouth at Sedgemoor, refused to reply to the questions of the inquisitors. Pitt seems to have pushed him hard, and he was so stung that he wished to call his tormentor out. From this we may at least infer that Pitt took a leading part in the deliberations of the Committee. On the other hand, it may be noticed that he only received 259, or one more than the lowest number of votes, while the member who headed the poll scored 518, a circumstance which would seem to indicate that he had as yet no strong position in the House.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xii. 561.

[2] Ib. xii. 488.

He soon had the opportunity of further exasperating the King, an opportunity of which he availed himself rather with the intemperance of resentment than with the astuteness of ambition; for he was now in declared opposition to the new Government, and as bitter against Carteret as he had been against Walpole. When Parliament met (November 16, 1742) after the recess, Pitt 'spoke like ten thousand angels,' but no trace of his speech remains. Of its spirit, however, we can judge from that which he delivered on December 10, on the vote for continuing the British troops in Flanders. Here the onslaught was against the King, and it is scarcely possible to conceive sarcasms more calculated to afflict the sovereign in his tenderest susceptibilities than those which Pitt now launched, even as we read them in an imperfect report; they are, indeed, so masterly in this way as almost to prove their authenticity. This is the first speech of real point and power delivered by Pitt of which we have any record. It may be noted in passing, that in the 'London Magazine' (one of the two newspapers that reported debates) Pitt's speech was unnoticed, while it did not appear in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' till fourteen months after it was delivered.[1]

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[1] Parl. Hist. xii. 490.

A few specimens may give a fair idea of the power which made Pitt so dreaded.

'The troops of Hanover, whom we are now expected to pay, marched into the Low Countries, where they still remain. They marched to the place most distant from the enemy, least in danger of an attack, and most strongly fortified had an attack been designed. They have, therefore, no other claim to be paid than that they left their own country for a place of greater security. I shall not, therefore, be surprised, after such another glorious campaign . . . . to be told that the money of this nation cannot be more properly employed than in hiring Hanoverians to eat and sleep.'[2]

'As to Hanover,' he continues, 'we know by experience that none of the merits of that Electorate are passed over in silence.' 'It is not to be imagined that His Majesty would not have sent his proportion of troops to the Austrian army had not the temptation of greater profit been laid industriously before him.' 'It is now too apparent that this powerful, this great, this mighty nation is considered only as a province to a despicable electorate, and that, in consequence of a plan formed long ago and invariably pursued, these [Hanoverian] troops are hired only to drain us of our money. . . . How much reason the transactions of almost every year have given for suspecting this absurd, ungrateful, and perfidious partiality it is not necessary to declare. . . . To dwell upon all the instances of partiality which have been shown, and the yearly visits which have been paid to that delightful country [Hanover], to reckon up all the sums that have been spent to aggrandise and enrich it, would be an irksome and invidious task, invidious to those who are afraid to be told the truth, and irksome to those who are unwilling to hear of the dishonour and injuries of their country. I shall, however, dwell no longer on this unpleasing subject than to express my hope that we shall no longer suffer ourselves to be deceived and oppressed.'

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[1] Parl. Hist. xii. 940 note.

[2] Ib. xii. 1033.

Conceive the position. On the one side a King, born and bred in Hanover, to whom the honour and welfare of Hanover and the Hanoverians were everything, whose paradise was Hanover, who counted the days to his annual visit to Hanover as a schoolboy counts the days to his holidays, who held Hanover as his own absolute monarchy and property as compared with the limited interest and power of the British throne; a King, moreover, courted by all, whose favour was necessary for the obtaining of office; accustomed to unstinted adulation and homage. On the other, this young jackanapes, an official in the court of his detested son, declaiming against him with every art of the actor and the rhetorician, with every power of voice and eye, holding him and his Hanover up to every kind of ridicule and contempt, before an audience mainly of place-hunters and place-holders, half trembling, half chuckling, as the philippic proceeded.

Why did Pitt take this line? If he wished for office (as he undoubtedly did), it seemed madness: he was committing something like suicide. But pique, as Sir George Savile well said, 'is the spur the devil rides the noblest tempers with.' He was unquestionably angry at his exclusion from office, which he had, no doubt, been told was due to the King. He was justly indignant that the long-continued efforts which had resulted in the overthrow of Walpole's overweening power had simply resulted in the shuffle of a few offices, and that to the victors the spoil had been denied; the sole and execrable minister Walpole had been replaced by a much less sole but not less execrable minister in Carteret. All this was gall to a man who had been among the most formidable in the heat of battle. That heat was now over, and the vanquished were picnicking with a few selected victors, while Pitt and his friends were left to cool themselves on the deserted battlefield. 'They tell me,' said Lord George Bentinck, in 1846, 'that I shall save fifteen hundred a year by Free Trade. I don't care for that. What I cannot bear is being sold.' Pitt, too, could not bear being sold.

That pique and a not ignoble rage had much to do with this philippic we may well assume. But we may also surmise that his attitude was not devoid of calculation. The veto of George II. was not to be removed by deference, so he would, like another Hannibal, destroy the obstacle with vinegar. The King had been exasperated by the lambent play of Pitt's earlier insinuations; he should be made to know how Pitt had then held his hand, what thunderbolts he had kept in reserve, what unspeakable things awaited the Prince who should frown on him. 'All the things I have told you,' said Sancho Panza, 'are tarts and cheese-cakes to what remains behind.' George II. should learn that the innuendoes that Pitt had levelled at him before were tarts and cheesecakes compared to what he had the power of producing. Pitt, in a word, had made up his mind that his only means of achieving his objects was by terror. He had thrown away the scabbard. Moreover, he was appealing from the Court to the people. The Court was foreign, immoral, and unpopular: the very name of Hanover was detested. And although Pitt's actual words reached the people late or not at all, there was an echo which was audible, and made known all through the three kingdoms that there was within the walls of Parliament an intrepid, unbribed, perhaps incorruptible orator who feared the face of no man, and who was embodying in fiery words the antipathies and distrusts of the nation.

CHAPTER VIII.

LET us consider for a moment the character of the Sovereign whom Pitt had set himself to bait.

George II. was first and fundamentally a German prince of his epoch. What other could he be? And these magnates all aped Louis XIV. as their model. They built huge palaces, as like Versailles as their means would permit, and generally beyond those limits, with fountains and avenues and dismally wide paths. Even in our own day a German monarch has left, fortunately unfinished, an accurate Versailles on a damp island in a Bavarian lake. In these grandiose structures they cherished a blighting etiquette, and led lives as dull as those of the aged and torpid carp in their own stew-ponds. Then at the proper season, they would break away into the forest and kill game. Moreover, still in imitation of their model, they held, as a necessary feature in the dreary drama of their existence, ponderous dalliance with unattractive mistresses, in whom they fondly tried to discern the charms of a Montespan or a La Vallière. This monotonous programme, sometimes varied by a violent contest whether they should occupy a seat with or without a back, or with or without arms, represented the even tenor of their lives.

George II. was better than this training would suggest.

His first ambition indeed was to be a Lovelace, but his second was to be a soldier. As a soldier he had the unaffected courage of the princes of his race. George, red and angry, fighting on foot at the battle of Dettingen, is a figure that is memorable and congenial to his British subjects.

As a Lovelace he lives to this day, for his portraits are generally in the posture of a coxcomb, with his face in outline wearing an irresistible smile, only comical to the beholder now, but with which he goes smirking into the eternities. It is not necessary to dwell on this part of his character; after all, a shallow part, for the one woman whom he loved was his wife. It was, however, a necessary part, vital to his conception of an ideal monarch. His confidences to his wife on this delicate point, though gross to us, seemed natural to him and to her, and were probably not alien to the atmosphere in which he was reared. Withal he bored his mistresses to death, and not impossibly they bored him. But that did not matter; the thing had to be done; he saw himself as in a mirror the fourteenth or fifteenth Louis; and when on the Saturdays in summer he drove down with Lady Yarmouth and his court to Richmond, escorted by Lifeguards kicking up the dust, to walk an hour in the garden, dine, and return to London, he imagined himself, as Horace Walpole tells us, the most gallant and lively prince in Europe![1]

We must admit then that he was born and bred a coxcomb, like his son. That he was a fond father no one will allege. His pleasures were coarse and dull. Even here one strange exception must be made. His letters to women, in the opinion of hostile critics, were tender and even exquisite.[1] How he came to write them we cannot know, for his character could not make one expect a grace of this kind.

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[1] Orford, Rem. 97.

In other respects we think him underrated. Sir Robert Walpole said that politically he was a coward. To what does this charge really amount? That a prince who had never left Germany till he was thirty-one, who succeeded to the throne when he was forty-four, after a life of such severe repression that his father even entertained the idea of transporting him to the plantations, should display that familiarity with his position, his political relations, and a strange nation, which alone could justify the independent action which is implied by the phrase 'political courage,' would have been astonishing; it would indeed have savoured of political recklessness. Walpole may have uttered the charge in resentment for some refusal of the King's. He was, we know, irritated at the moment by finding that the King had promised to go to Hanover without informing him. The King no doubt blustered in private when he yielded in public. But domestic effervescence was the only method of relief for a Sovereign who knew his own limitations, and who also knew that, constitutionally, he would have at last to yield to his Minister. What is 'political courage' in a constitutional Sovereign? What would Walpole have said had the monarch shown 'political courage' and insisted on having his own stubborn way? 'Had he,' wrote Waldegrave, with his usual good sense, 'always been as firm and undaunted in the Closet as he showed himself at Oudenarde and Dettingen, he might not have proved quite as good a king in this limited monarchy.'

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[1] Hervey, ii. 182, 228.

His foible, we are told, was avarice. We do not know that he was mean in his personal expenditure. Waldegrave, again, who was fair, and knew him better than most men, declared that 'he was always just, and sometimes charitable, though rarely generous.' He amused himself, we are told, with counting his guineas in private. That perhaps was not a very royal occupation, though a nursery rhyme indicates that it is; it may have been a trick learned when he was poor, or it may have been his substitute for those games of anxious futility now known as 'patience.' But the real ground for the charge of avarice in the eyes of his British subjects was that he accumulated a great treasure in Hanover. If that be avarice, it was the avarice of the kings who made Prussia, the famous Frederick and his father. Parsimony in such cases may well be a virtue; and subjects may even prefer to be ruled by those who possess it rather than by princes who rear vast and idle palaces like the Bourbons of Spain and Naples, or live with unbridled extravagance like George IV. But kings rarely hit the right mean; if they are generous they are called profuse, if they are careful they are called mean. George's avarice, if such it was, was a public-spirited avarice. He hoarded for his own beloved country, he got as much out of his Kingdom as he could for his Electorate; for he was a Hanoverian first and a Briton a long way afterwards. But when Hanover needed it, he spent all his hoards on her behalf ungrudgingly, and died poor.

We do not claim him as a great King, far from it.

But we think him unjustly and hastily condemned. It is easy in a slapdash manner to lavish sarcasms on a King who presented many tempting opportunities for satire. The genius of Thackeray could not resist them, small blame to it. But the King's absurdities should not blind one to his merits. The just critic must recognise in George II. a constant substantial shrewdness, seasoned with humour. His sagacity made him realise his constitutional limitations; his penetration appraised with great justice the men by whom he was surrounded; he had to do much that he disliked and resented, but he did it when he saw that it was necessary, not gracefully, for he was never graceful, but without scandal. His rough common sense constantly vented itself in the ejaculation of 'Stuff and nonsense,'[1] which proved his command of at least one British idiom, and not unfrequently a just appreciation of affairs. His judgment of men was sure. He had only three ministers who were men of commanding ability; Walpole, Carteret, and Pitt. Two of these were his especial favourites; to the third, who had mortally offended him, he submitted. For Newcastle he had a supreme contempt; but wisely accommodated himself to one who was useful, who 'did his business,' to whom he was accustomed, and whom he knew through and through. He infinitely preferred Carteret to Pelham, but at the supreme moment he chose Pelham in spite of Carteret. No doubt this was due largely to the influence of Walpole, but many kings would not have followed an advice so contrary to their own bias. He piqued himself on his knowledge of mankind, not without reason, and Hervey depicts a scene where he reels off a catalogue of names, and the King, tersely and unhesitatingly, gives the character of each.

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[1] Holdernesse to Newcastle, Nov. 22, 1756. Add. MSS. 32869.

The fact is that George II. had the misfortune to keep in his inmost circle a vigilant and deadly enemy. John Lord Hervey, the Sporus of Pope's blighting satire, akin in mind and probably in blood to Horace Walpole, was always with him; noting down, with spruce rancour, a venomous pen, and some dramatic power, the random outbreaks of his master. It is not wise to attribute literal exactitude or even general veracity to such chronicles; the man who can commit so gross a breach of confidence is little worthy of trust. That Hervey in the very heart of the King's family should have sate down with a pen dipped in vitriol to portray its most intimate aspects is perhaps our gain but his disgrace. He was a viper warmed in the bosom of the Court, and stung it to the full extent of his opportunity and powers. A court is considered fair game by such reptiles. But it is hard to see why princes, who after all are human beings, should not be allowed to some extent the same sanctity of family life which humbler human beings claim and maintain. Hervey was the intimate associate of the King, the confidential friend of the Queen, the lover of one of their daughters, he was the tame cat of the family circle. He thought it seemly to narrate their secrets in so brutal a fashion that some more decent member of his family tore out and destroyed the coarsest and bitterest passages. What remains is coarse and bitter enough. It shows the King and Queen in a most unfavourable light. But that aspect is fascinating compared to that in which he presents himself. The story of royalty should not be a Court

Circular; but neither should it be a lampoon, written by a trusted friend. The only excuse for him is that being devoted to the Queen, who in her way merited his devotion, he detested the King whom he deemed unworthy of her. But that does not help the reader who looks to him for facts. The George II. we know is the George II. of Hervey, and Hervey's Journal proves the writer to be unworthy of implicit credence.

Chesterfield also drew a character of the King. But when we discount Chesterfield's studied epigrams, poised with the malignant nicety of one who hated his subject, there is not much left for discredit.

The real crime of George II. in the eyes of his British subjects was almost in the category of virtues, for it was his devotion to Hanover. Innocent and natural as it was in him, it seems wonderful to us that our fathers should have endured it. How they must have hated Popery! But Hanover was the King's home and fatherland; all his pleasant associations were with Hanover; there he was absolute Sovereign, and could lead without criticism the life that he enjoyed. He could not help being a Hanoverian any more than William III. could help being a Hollander. The English chose their Dutch and Hanoverian Sovereigns with their eyes open, and had no right to complain if what they desired and obtained was somewhat bitter in digestion. Neither William nor the two first Georges ever professed to be other than what they were; they never for a moment simulated that they were English, they never pretended to like England. 'He hated the English,' says Lord Hervey of George II. And when at the first available instant they fled from Kensington and Hampton Court to Loo or Herrenhausen, their English subjects ignored the mortifying preference, from devotion no doubt to the Protestant Succession; but partly also because these monarchs were profoundly indifferent to them. With George II., it is true, these excursions were accompanied, as in Shakespeare, by alarms; alarms only too well founded that he would return with a pocket full of treaties for subsidies which the British taxpayer would have to pay. But all these three kings accurately understood their position. They knew that they were not chosen from affection, or for their qualities, certainly not for their attractions. They were taken as necessities, almost odious necessities, to keep out a Romanist dynasty which represented something to the people that was more odious still.

They entertained, then, no illusions; a bargain had been driven with them and they would keep it; they gave their pound, or more, of flesh. They would occupy palaces, receive civil lists, interview ministers, and keep out the Pretender. But that did not imply a perpetual exile from home; they intended to get as many holidays as possible; and they did. They might be a hateful necessity for England, but England as a necessity was almost as hateful to them. Their life in this island was servitude, more or less penal; they only breathed by the dykes of Holland or the waters of the Leine. If this be clearly understood, much confusion and vituperation may be avoided. But the wonder is that the English (for the Scots and Irish had little to do with it) should have had the civic courage in the cause of religion and liberty to endure the compact.

George II. then, we contend, putting his private life apart, which we must judge by the German standard of those days, was not a bad King under the conditions of his time and of his throne. He was perhaps the best of the Georges; better than George I. or George IV., better as a King than George III., though inferior no doubt in the domestic virtues. All things considered, it is wonderful that he was as good as he was, and he scarcely deserves the thoughtless opprobrium which he has incurred.

CHAPTER IX.

AND now it is necessary to say a word of Continental affairs.

A life of Pitt should concern itself with Pitt alone, or with the persons and events immediately relating to him. But as during this period of his life foreign policy was all in all, and Britain seemed a mere anxious appendage to the Continent, it is necessary to give a succinct sketch of the familiar but complicated sequence of events in Europe which occurred at this time, and which inspired almost all the debates in which Pitt took part.

Walpole, as we have seen, had declared war against Spain in 1739, and the not very glorious course of those operations does not call for record. But the year 1740 marked a new and critical epoch. Death in those few months was busy lopping off the crowned heads of Europe, as if to clear the scene for two great figures. On February 6 died Pope Clement XII. On March 31 died the shrewd but brutal boor Frederick William I., and at the age of twenty-eight his son Frederick II. reigned in his stead. His accession was to unveil a mystery; and where mankind had hitherto seen a fiddling dilettante, contemptuous of his countrymen and craving for all that was French, to reveal the direct ancestor of German unity, the most practical and tenacious of conquerors. On

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October 20 the Emperor Charles VI., the figure-head for which we had fought in the War of the Succession, and, a week afterwards, Anne the Empress of Russia passed away. Rarely has the sickle of Eternity gathered so pompous a harvest. Between February and November it had garnered the Holy Roman Emperor, the Holy Roman Pontiff, the sovereign of Russia, and the sovereign of Prussia. Of these the death at Vienna was by far the most momentous. For Charles left behind him no son, but a young daughter of twenty-three, about to be a mother, whose succession he had attempted to secure by the Pragmatic Sanction of 1718, ratified and recognised by solemn international instruments. On the morning of his death she was promptly proclaimed sovereign of her father's dominions; but her treasury was empty and her ministers paralysed. Bavaria at once protested. Behind Bavaria stood Frederick armed to the teeth, eager to let slip the dogs of war. Every one saw his preparations; no one could tell at whom they were aimed.

'No fair judge,' Mr. Carlyle[1] tells us, can blame the 'young magnanimous King' for seizing this 'flaming opportunity.' The point is fortunately not one which a biographer of Pitt is called upon to discuss, except to note that hero-worship makes bad history. For our purpose it is sufficient to say that Frederick did avail himself of the new juncture of affairs. Charles had died on October 20; on December 6 the announcement was officially made in Berlin that the King had resolved to march a body of troops into Silesia; on December 13 these had passed the frontier, not as enemies of the Queen of Hungary or

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[1] Frederick, iii. 141.

Silesia, it was declared, but as protective friends of Silesia and her Majesty's rights there. All this was preceded and accompanied by the strangest diplomacy that the world had seen, but which does not concern this abstract. Thus begins the first period of the Continental war.

Britain, like Prussia, was bound by treaty to maintain the Pragmatic Sanction which assured the Austrian dominions to Maria Theresa. Our statesmen at this moment were engaged in a pastime of more immediate interest and excitement, for they were hunting Walpole to death; the exhaustion of the quarry was evident; the end could not be far off. But even then the nature of the aggression and the appeal of a young and beautiful Queen exercised the usual influence on the chivalrous sympathies of the nation. Maria Theresa could, moreover, appeal to treaty rights. So that Walpole found himself reluctantly forced into a new war while the former was still undecided and incomplete. He agreed to renew the pledges of England to maintain that Pragmatic Sanction which secured the succession to the daughter of Charles VI.; he agreed, moreover, to an immediate subsidy of 300,000*l.*, and to sending a force of 12,000 men. Meanwhile Marshal Schwerin had defeated the Austrians at Molwitz at the very moment that the House of Commons was debating these proposals.

This victory brought into the arena new and eager claimants for some part of the Austrian spoils, now apparently so available. The eminent guarantors of the integrity of Austria were suddenly transformed into hungry schemers for her immediate partition. Spain, Sardinia, and Poland-Saxony all advanced pretensions. But a mightier enemy was preparing to join hands with Frederick and take the field; for it was scarcely to be supposed that the secular enemy of the House of Hapsburg could remain quiescent at such a moment. France saw a unique opportunity for breaking up the Austrian dominions, and reducing the portion reserved to the young Queen to comparative insignificance. In France, as in England, the Minister was peaceful, but the party of war carried the day. Two French armies of 40,000 men each crossed the Rhine in August 1741. One under Marshal Maillebois marched on Hanover. The ruler of that State, who, as sovereign of Great Britain, was the active ally of Maria Theresa, hastily concluded a treaty of neutrality for one year, promising to give no assistance to the young Queen in his Hanoverian capacity, and to refrain from voting for her husband as Emperor. For this treaty George II. was violently attacked by his British subjects, who believed themselves to be fighting for Hanoverian interests, while Hanover itself was thus snugly removed into a haven of peace. The censure was, we think, excessive, if not undeserved. The treaty did indeed accentuate the duality which somewhat unequally divided the person of George. But if that be once conceded, it must be admitted that he was right as Elector to do his very best for Hanover, just as King he was bound to do his very best for England. As Elector, then, he was fully justified in keeping his defenceless State out of the devastation of war, from which it was destined to suffer so terribly sixteen years later from another French army under the Duke of Richelieu, when neutrality was no longer possible.

While Maillebois marched towards Hanover, the other army, under Marshals Belleisle and Broglie, marched through

Bavaria and menaced Vienna. Maria Theresa had to fly to Hungary, and appeal in a manner made familiar by description to the chivalry of the Magyars. The Elector of Bavaria, who was the figure-head chosen by the confederates for the imperial throne, and who had his fill of titles in the lack of more substantial fare, was proclaimed Archduke of Austria at Linz, King of Bohemia in Prague, and soon afterwards Emperor in Frankfort. It seemed as if a vast partition was about to take place, and the House of Austria destined to disappear.

But this was the turning-point; in the general blackness there appeared rays of hope for Maria Theresa. Walpole, the peace minister, disappeared, and the control of Foreign Affairs in Great Britain passed to Carteret, who was warm for Austria, and eager to play an active part on the Continent. Moreover, the misfortunes of the Queen roused the enthusiasm of Great Britain. Five millions were voted for the war, half a million as a subsidy to the Queen of Hungary. Sixteen thousand men were sent into Flanders to assist the exertions of the Dutch. Unfortunately there were no exertions to assist, and our troops remained useless. Our fleets were more active. They harried the Spaniards and controlled the Mediterranean. A squadron entered the Bay of Naples and gave the King, afterwards Charles III. of Spain, an hour in which to decide whether he would abandon the confederacy against Austria or see his beautiful city bombarded. The King of Naples yielded, but as King of Spain never forgave the English for this humiliation.

The Austrians, too, found a bold and skilful general in Khevenhüller, who seized Bavaria and occupied Munich

Feb. 12, 1742. on the very day on which its ruler was crowned Emperor. In the succeeding June a peace, which proved afterwards to be but a truce, was concluded at Breslau between Austria and Prussia, through the mediation of Great Britain, and followed by the Treaty of Berlin, to which George II. both as King and Elector, the Empress of Russia, the States General, and the King of Poland as Elector of Saxony were parties. There had been a secret armistice between the two states in the winter of 1741, by which Lower Silesia and Niesse had been ceded to Frederick, but this had soon proved inoperative. A new situation was however produced by the severe battle of Chotusitz, in which the Austrians suffered defeat at the hands of Frederick. Maria Theresa now yielded to the pressure of the English ministry and ceded all Lower and part of Upper Silesia with the county of Glatz to Frederick, who in return abandoned his allies and left the French to themselves, on the plea that they were in secret communication with Vienna. Saxony, under his influence, also withdrew from the war, and the King of Prussia and the Elector of Hanover concluded a defensive alliance, the Elector guaranteeing Silesia and Glatz to the King. Frederick saw that he had been too successful. He was determined to retain Silesia, but he saw with apprehension great French armies overrunning the German Empire. That France should be aggrandised at the expense of Germany was no part of his policy. For Germany as Germany he had no natural affection; but the waters of Germany, however troubled they might be, he proposed to keep for his own fishing.

With the Peace of Breslau, then, the first period of the war ends, and the second begins, in which it assumes a new character. It is not Frederick and France fighting against Austria; it is Austria supported by Britain, and to some extent Holland, fighting, with the secret sympathy of Germany, against France and Spain. Elizabeth, too, the daughter of Peter the Great, had mounted the throne of Russia, and assisted her sister sovereign with Dec. 1741. sympathy and with money. The whole aspect of the war was suddenly changed. Austria was now free to turn her whole forces on France, and she did so with terrible effect. The French had to evacuate Bohemia in a retreat so heroic and so appalling that it anticipated the horrors of 1812. Of the 40,000 men with whom he had crossed the Rhine, Belleisle brought back but 8000 into France. The share of Great Britain in the war became substantial and direct. The Elector of Hanover, relieved from apprehension by his treaty with Prussia and the success of Austria, reduced his army by 16,000 men, but the King of England took them into his pay. This measure exasperated his British subjects, whose attention was thus once more called to the jarring interests of the Kingdom and the Electorate combined in George's person. But Ministers carried the day, and in June 1743 the King himself took the field with an Anglo-German army of some 40,000 men under the command of Lord Stair. At Dettingen, not far from Frankfort, in escaping from a position of extreme jeopardy, they encountered and defeated the French. The strangest part of this engagement was that there was then nominally no war between France and Great Britain, and that these operations were only accidental auxiliary conflicts. It was not for nine months afterwards that war between the two countries was formally declared.

Sept. 1743. Later on in this year George II. took an even more active measure, and through Carteret, as Secretary of State, though behind the back of his other ministers, signed the Treaty of Worms. For many years past it had been the policy of the House of Savoy to put itself up to auction, and by the Treaty of Worms George II. became the successful bidder. The King of Sardinia was to receive some territory from Austria, and 200,000*l.* a year from Great Britain, while he was to assist the Austrian cause with 45,000 men. Carteret at the same time covenanted to pay Maria Theresa a subsidy of 300,000*l.* a year 'so long as the war should continue, or the necessity of her affairs should require.' But this the British Ministry refused to recognise, and it became the subject of fierce debate in Parliament.

To meet this combination, Louis XV., on the advice of his Minister but against his own better judgment, signed one of those one-sided and altruistic treaties which characterised French policy at this time, and renewed the family compact of 1733 by a treaty signed at Fontainebleau in October 1743. In this new edition the Bourbons of France and Spain pledged themselves to an indissoluble union. France was to declare war against Great Britain and Sardinia, to help Spain to reconquer Parma and the Milanese for Don Philip, and to compel Great Britain to give up her colony of Georgia. Finally, the two Powers were not to make peace until Gibraltar and, if possible, Minorca were restored to Spain.[1]

But the Austrian successes once more brought Frederick into the field to redress the balance, which now inclined too much to Austria, as it had inclined too much to France. Austria had acquired Bavaria for the moment, and perhaps would never evacuate it; she might be encouraged to attempt the reconquest of Silesia. Her armies were now in Alsace; where would they stop? The Queen, he knew, was only a degree less tenacious than himself. So he signed a new convention at Frankfort with the Emperor, the King of France, the King of Sweden as Landgrave of Hesse, and the Elector Palatine, and again took up arms May 1744. against Austria, which was almost drained of troops. France about the same time formally declared war against Great Britain and Austria, whom she had been fighting, so to speak, incognito, for three years past. On the other hand a quadruple alliance was concluded between Great Britain, Austria, Holland, and Saxony; based as usual on British subsidies, which Parliament ungrudgingly voted, with the eloquent but surprising support of Pitt.

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[1] Martin, Hist. de France, xv. 265. Leadam, 376.

Here begins the third period of the war. Louis XV. and Marshal Saxe at the head of 80,000 men entered the Austrian Netherlands almost without resistance. Frederick soon made himself master of Bohemia and Bavaria, and returned the Electorate to its sovereign, the Emperor Charles VII. In January 1745, worn out with misfortunes and anxieties and dignities, but once more in his capital, that hapless monarch died. Within three months his successor had concluded peace with Austria through the earnest pressure of the British Cabinet on the haughty Queen; the Elector abandoning his claims on the Austrian dominions, and promising his vote for the Empire to Maria Theresa's husband. Peace between Austria and the King of Poland, Elector of Saxony, followed in May, when the contracting parties entered into a premature concert for the partition of the Prussian dominions.

Otherwise 1745 was a disastrous year for Austria. The Allies, Austrians, British, and Dutch, under the Duke of Cumberland, sustained a bloody defeat at Fontenoy in May; and Great Britain, occupied with the domestic disturbance caused by the landing of Charles Edward, had to withdraw from active participation in the war. In August a secret convention was concluded at Hanover between the Kings of Prussia and Great Britain, by which the latter Power guaranteed Silesia to the former. This was the beginning of the end. The British Ministry now notified to the unyielding Queen that she must come to terms with her enemy, or expect no more assistance from England or Holland. The Austrian arms met everywhere with reverses. While the young Queen was planning with Saxony a triumphant march on Berlin, Frederick broke into Saxony and occupied Dresden. On this final blow Maria Theresa accepted the mediation of Great Britain and signed, on Christmas Day, 1745, the peace of Dresden which gave Silesia and Glatz to Frederick. So ends the third period of this strange and erratic war; a labyrinth of fugitive conventions and transient alliances, with two strong purposes in the centre.

But the auxiliary combatants remained at strife, just as the seconds in a duel have sometimes fought after their principals had settled their own differences. And so we now enter on its fourth period, that in which the British, Austrians, and Dutch (with the assistance of the Piedmontese in Italy) contended against France and Spain.

The part of this war which chiefly concerns Great Britain was fought in Flanders. And in all these transactions it must be noted that a main difficulty of the British Ministry, both from the practical and from the parliamentary point of view, lay in the problem of moving the Dutch. The Hollanders had everything to apprehend from the triumph of the French arms, but their phlegmatic temper, and still more the impracticable nature of their constitution, offered great obstacles to their co-operation. Anglers may see an analogy between these British negotiations with the Dutch and the tardy and tantalising sport of sniggling for eels. At the beginning of 1746, matters seemed to have come to a climax. The French were harrying Flanders, and were threatening to invade Holland. The Dutch Government were now stirred into proposing active measures, and the raising of a large army, to be under the command of the Prince of Waldeck; but they declined to declare war against France. The British agreed to a joint force of 100,000 men, comprising 40,000 to be furnished by the States-General, 30,000 by Austria, some Hanoverians and Saxons to be paid by England and Holland, and 6000 Hessians to be provided by England after Charles Edward had been finally defeated. The Dutch regarded the British offers as inadequate; for it is a cardinal principle of all Continental wars in which Great Britain is concerned that her purse is to be open to her allies, and that she is to find the funds.

'The Dutch we know are good allies,
So are they all with subsidies.'[1]

They were, moreover, not indisposed to negotiate with the French. These, meanwhile, under the leadership of Marshal Saxe, were occupying the Low Countries almost without interruption or resistance. In February they entered Brussels; in May, Antwerp. Mons, Charleroi, and Namur successively fell into their hands, and they ended the campaign by defeating the allies at Roucoux, and remaining practically in possession of the Austrian Netherlands. But there was a glimpse of peace, in that some negotiations, abortive though they were destined to be, were opened at Breda.

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[1] Sir C. H. Williams, i. 247.

In 1747 the Duke of Cumberland again assumed the command with the usual disastrous result. The Dutch contingent, also as usual, was very inadequate: commercial nations are perhaps apt to treat international engagements in too commercial a spirit. But the irruption into Dutch Flanders of twenty thousand Frenchmen roused a spirit of a different kind. The Dutch rose like one man, overturned their rulers, and once more entrusted the Stadtholderate to the House of Orange. This was a national gain. But the luckless Cumberland again sustained a bloody defeat at Lauffeld. The battle, however, had one indirect but happy consequence. Our best General, Ligonier, was captured, and, being of French birth, was favourably received by Louis XV., who threw out hints of peace and placed him in communication with Marshal Saxe. The Marshal admitted that the war, and he himself as concerned in it, were profoundly unpopular in France, that peace might be obtained on easy terms, and suggested that Cumberland and he should be the negotiators.

Pelham was naturally eager for a pacification, George II. less so, and what the King wished Newcastle was anxious to wish. But a congress to adjust a treaty met at Aix-la-Chapelle in March 1748, and in April the preliminaries of a treaty were signed by the British and French and Dutch plenipotentiaries.

Maria Theresa held aloof. To her it seemed that the first and only duty of the British, and, indeed, of all other nations, was to fight and work and pay that she might regain Silesia, just as her father had held that the first, last, and only duty of Europe was to establish him in Spain. This peace would ratify the acquisition of Silesia by Frederick, and though she herself had ceded it, she could not bring herself to declare the cession definite. England, however, could no longer agree to the general interest being overridden by the obstinacy of the Empress-Queen; there had been bloodshed and suffering enough on her account. However just a cause may be, there are limits to human endurance, more especially when the cause to be upheld has no substantial importance for the defending nation. The definitive treaty was signed on October 18. Two 1748. days later, Spain, the original belligerent, acceded to it. There were, a philosopher may note, no stipulations regarding the commercial regulations which had been the original cause of our war with Spain. On the 23rd it was accepted by the Austrian Government.

This is a narrative, as condensed as possible, of the foreign affairs which entered into our parliamentary debates. That part of the war which took place in Italy has been excluded. It was a mere contest of petty rapine in which strange princes parcelled out Italy; which can scarcely be said to have concerned Great Britain, and Pitt not at all. Nor has it left the least visible trace in history.

The greater war which we have summarised is a sufficient tangle. Leslie Stephen calls it 'that complicated series of wars which lasted some ten years, and passes all power of the ordinary human intellect to understand or remember. For what particular reason Englishmen were fighting at Dettingen, or Fontenoy, or Lauffeld is a question which a man can only answer when he has been specially crammed for examination, and his knowledge has not begun to ooze out.'[1] This is the exact truth, as the ill-fated chronicler who gropes about among the treaties and conventions is fain to confess. But apart from its complications this war is not in itself very memorable or exalted, though it has left an indelible result in the great Prussian monarchy. It was not beautiful or glorious. The guarantors of Austria at the first sign of her weakness had hurried, most of them, to divide her spoils, at the same time betraying each other from time to time without scruple, as their immediate interests required. Frederick had a business-like candour which almost disarms criticism. Macaulay in a famous passage has pointed out that innocent peasants perished in thousands all over the world that he might obtain and retain an Austrian province. And Maria Theresa, with all her maternal charm, is not wholly admirable. It was natural that she should fight for her rights, and induce all she could to fight for her; natural, perhaps, that she should be content that all Europe should bleed so that she might retain her territory. But we cannot forget that she who was ready that myriads should perish, not of Austrians or Magyars alone, but of all the nations that she could enlist in her cause, to maintain the sanctity of her rights to Silesia, was later on an accomplice in the partition of Poland; a reluctant accomplice, it is fair to add, as she herself was awake to the inconsistency of her position.

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[1] L. Stephen, English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century, 138.

Among all these stately figures and famous slaughters we see the central fact of the period, the shameless and naked cynicism of the eighteenth century, which, turning its back for ever on the wars of faith and conviction, looked only to contests of prey. And so it continued till the great Revolution cleared the air, and, followed up by the poignant discipline of Napoleon, made way for the wars of nationality.

CHAPTER X.

NO more of Pitt's speeches are recorded during the session, which, with the enviable ease of those days, having opened on November 16, 1742, closed on April 21, 1743. In the interval before the ensuing session an event occurred, not in itself memorable, but notable for the contest that followed. In July 1743 occurred the long-expected death of Wilmington, the nominal head of the Government. In itself this departure would not have caused a ripple on the surface of politics, but it opened a critical succession. Pulteney, now Earl of Bath, at once laid claim to it; and his pretensions were warmly supported by Carteret, who was the minister in attendance on the King in Germany. Henry Pelham, supported by his brother Newcastle, also applied for the vacant post. As between these two groups it seemed certain that Bath, through Carteret, who was on the ground, would have the preference. Pelham, indeed, at the instance of Walpole, had, before the King left England, applied to his Majesty for the reversion of the moribund Minister's place, and had, if Coxe may be trusted, received a definite promise. It seems difficult to credit this, for George was a man of his word, yet the Pelham brothers were unfeignedly astonished when the reversion was given them; so that had Pelham indeed received such a pledge, he must have expected that the King would break it. Six weeks of dire suspense followed the death of Wilmington; an interval which was probably caused by the anxiety of the Sovereign to consult Walpole, while he intimated to Pelham that his decision would be conveyed to the Ministry by Carteret. This seemed a deathblow to the chances of Pelham, though the King's aversion to Bath was notorious. But a letter at length arrived from Carteret, in which he announced, with unaffected regret but with a generous promise of support, that the prize had fallen to Pelham. The brothers were elated, if such an expression can ever be applied to the timid and cautious Pelham. Newcastle was transported by the 'agreeable but most surprising news;' so much so, as to acknowledge that Carteret's letter was 'manly.'

Walpole, in writing his congratulations, looked warily to the future. 'Recruits,' he advised, should now be sought 'from the Cobham squadron. . . . Pitt is thought able and formidable, try him or show him. . . . Whig it with all opponents that will parley, but 'ware Tory.' Newcastle, on reading this letter to his brother, wrote back: 'I am afraid, one part of it, viz. the taking in of the Cobham party and the Whigs in opposition, without a mixture of Tories, is absolutely impracticable; and, therefore, the only question is whether, in order to get the Cobham party, etc., you will bring in three or four Tories, at least, with them, for, without that, they will not come, and this is what I have the greatest difficulty to bring myself to.' Orford's advice was not followed, and Pelham's appointments were few and narrow. Two of Lord Bath's followers, a friend of the Prince of Wales, and a friend of his own, the only surviving name of the four, Henry Fox, were gratified, and that was all. And even this limited arrangement was not completed before Parliament met.

Dec. 1, 1743. The opening of the new session was anticipated with keen interest, as the Ministry was known to be rent with divisions, and hatred of the Hanoverians had immeasurably swollen in consequence of rumours of the favour that the King had shown to his electoral subjects. He had been surrounded by Hanoverian Guards to the exclusion of the English Guards; he had worn at Dettingen a yellow sash, which it appears was a Hanoverian symbol of authority; the Hanoverians had refused to obey the orders of Lord Stair, and so forth. We can easily imagine the buzz of angry legend and comment; for national antipathies have no difficulty in obtaining substantial affidavits in their support. Of this wild but not unreasonable intemperance Pitt, it is scarcely necessary to say, was the mouthpiece. In the debate on the Address he spoke with his accustomed violence. He called Carteret 'an execrable or sole minister, who had renounced the British nation, and seemed to have drunk of the potion described in poetic fictions which made men forget their country.'[1] So far as this tirade concerned Carteret's authority, nothing could be more absurd or wide of the truth. He could indeed scarcely have chosen a more unfortunate epithet than 'sole.' So far from being a sole minister, Carteret, as we have seen, had just received a crushing defeat in the elevation of Henry Pelham to the first place in the Ministry, and the rejection of his own candidate; though he had strained all his influence in the cause.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xiii. 136.

Nor had this 'sole minister' any parliamentary following; his only strength lay with the King, where it had just been found signally inadequate. The supreme minister in the last resort, and behind the scenes, was, in truth, Walpole. It was his decision and his alone that had turned the scale against Carteret and Pulteney. Carteret was congenial to the King, for he worked with his Sovereign in matters of foreign policy; and, as we have seen, he could talk politics to the Sovereign in the King's own language. But, while the King tried to carry out his own views in Continental affairs, in domestic politics he looked to Walpole alone. Still, invective must necessarily have an object, and, by aiming at the King's confidential Foreign Minister, Pitt was able to wound the King as well. It is hinted by Yorke, the parliamentary chronicler, that Pitt's acrimony was dictated by jealousy of Carteret's influence with the Prince of Wales.[1] As to this there is no proof, and conjecture is idle. Carteret and Frederick had indeed been long connected, but this would scarcely impel one of the Prince's court to attack one of the Prince's friends. Moreover, were this the motive, Pitt's attacks would have been of a different and milder character, enough to damage Carteret, but not enough to embroil Pitt with the Prince, who was not merely his master, but the head of his political connection. It is clear that Pitt's sole object was to destroy Carteret as minister, not for the ignominious purpose of subverting him in a court camarilla, but to show his own power by demolishing the conspicuous man, the vizier of the King who proscribed himself. The mere fact that Carteret represented the King's Continental policy, and that Pitt had apparently determined, in the jargon of that day, to storm the Closet, seems sufficient reason for Pitt's bitterness. He denounced Carteret as he denounced Hanover, as darling accessories of a monarch whom he was determined to harass in every way until his attacks should produce compliance or surrender. But it was the fate of Pitt to have to recant his abuse of Carteret, as solemnly and as publicly as he recanted his abuse of Walpole. 'His abilities,' said Pitt in 1770 of Carteret, 'did honour to this House and to this nation. In the upper departments of Government he had not his equal. And I feel a pride in declaring that to his patronage, to his friendship, and instruction, I owe whatever I am.'[1] It was a generous, almost an extravagant statement. But it shows how little importance should be attached to the early philippics of Pitt, as of other aspiring and brilliant young men. Invectives are one of the least subtle and most piquant forms of advertisement, but they do not facilitate the task of biographers.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xiii. 473 (note). Cf. Phillimore, 226. But Carteret had taken the lead of the Prince's party in the House of Lords so far back as 1737.

The Sovereign he attacked openly and unsparingly. It was proposed, in the Address to the Throne, to congratulate the King on his escape from the dangers of the battle of Dettingen. This Pitt deprecated. 'Suppose, Sir,' he asked, 'it should appear that His Majesty was exposed to few or no dangers abroad, but those to which he is daily liable at home, such as the overturning of his coach or the stumbling of his horse, would not the address proposed, instead of being a compliment, be an affront and insult to the Sovereign?' No affront or insult could at any rate be more stinging or more unfounded than his wanton insinuation. George II.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xvi. 1097.

had the courage of his race, and had displayed it at Dettingen. At first his runaway horse had almost carried him into the French lines, so he dismounted and fought on foot for the rest of the day; not leaving the field until he had created a number of knights banneret; the last British king to take the field, and the last bannerets to be so created.[1]

It was vile then to disparage the King's courage, but political life in those days had no scruple and little shame. The sneers at Hanover with which this speech was sprinkled were better founded and deserved. But a serious and reasonable argument, not yet obsolete, pervaded Pitt's violent rhetoric on this occasion. It was that though the balance of power concerned all states, it concerned our island state least and last of all. Moreover, he attacked our recent policy on other grounds. On our attitude to Austria, then fighting for its integrity under Maria Theresa, he heaped scorn from another point of view. We had promised her abundant assistance when she was fighting Prussia alone; when France intervened we shrank back and left her in the lurch. That, he declared, was not our only discredit. When Prussia attacked the Queen of Hungary, and Spain, Poland, and Bavaria laid claim to her father's succession, we should have known that the preservation of the whole was impossible, and advised her to yield the part claimed by Frederick. But the words from the Throne and the speeches of the courtiers had persuaded the Austrian Government that Great Britain was determined to support her. So great was the determination, that even Hanover added near one-third to her army at her own cost, the first extraordinary expense, it was believed, that Hanover had borne for her purposes since her fortunate conjunction with England! But then the French intervened. Hanover was in danger, and so we promptly retired. We gave some money, indeed, but that was because our ministers contrived to make a job of every parliamentary grant. The Queen, seeing that she was deserted, came to terms with Frederick, but much worse terms than he had originally offered. Then was the time for us to have insisted on her making peace with France and the phantom Emperor. But we had advised her against this, for no conceivable reason except apparently that we wished to go on paying the 16,000 Hanoverians whom we were employing. As regards the battle of Dettingen, he declared that we had no idea of fighting, but that the French had caught us in a trap. The ardour of our troops was restrained by the cowardice of the Hanoverians; we ran away in the night, leaving our dead and wounded behind us. Never would he consent to call the battle a victory, it was only a fortunate escape.

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[1] Fortescue, Hist. of the Army, ii. 101.

Were we to continue fighting? he asked. We ourselves had nothing to gain by it, though Hanover, no doubt, would continue to receive four or five hundred thousand pounds a year from us if we did. But we should consider, even the Hanoverians should consider, that we could not carry on a long war as in the reign of Queen Anne. We were not far from a national bankruptcy, and should soon have to disband our army. What, then, if the Pretender should land at the head of a French force?

This outline is given to show the singular but forcible mixture of shrewd argument, wayward extravagance, and bitter scoffs, which at this time constituted Pitt's parliamentary armament.

He followed this speech up by another on December 6, of which little remains; but his vehemence brought him into collision with the Speaker. He urged contemptuously that if we must have German troops we should rather hire those of Cologne and Saxony than those of Hanover. The King was surrounded by German officers, and by one English Minister without an English heart. The little finger of one man, he declared, had lain heavier upon the nation than an administration which had continued twenty years. Murray, however, the Solicitor-General, afterwards Lord Mansfield, delivered a consummate speech against the motion, which carried so much conviction that Pitt with some of the other Cobhamites struck out the words relating to the exhausted and impoverished state of the kingdom. But the amended motion was rejected by a majority of seventy-seven.

And now there occurred a significant fissure in the Opposition. Pitt and Lyttelton were inclined to support the maintenance of the British force in Flanders. But Cobham, the chief of the little party, was uncompromising: he resigned his commission 'as captain of the troop of horse grenadiers' and his seat in the Cabinet. A formula had to be framed to unite the two sections, and so George Grenville brought forward a motion praying his Majesty 'in consideration of the exhausted and impoverished state of the Kingdom not to proceed in this war without the concurrence of the Dutch.' Pitt concurred in this motion, and promised that if it were rejected he would join in opposing the continued employment of the British as well as the Hanoverian troops in Flanders.

This revision by a little group is not without significance;

as the Opposition, we are told, at the beginning of the session, entrusted the direction of the party to a committee of six, consisting of Dodington, Pitt, Sir John Cotton, Sir Watkin Wynn, Waller, and Lyttelton. The putting of political leadership into commission has never been successful in Parliament, and the device seems finally to have broken down when it was last attempted, by the Protectionist party, after the fall of Peel. Nor does it appear to have been more happy on this occasion. Pitt and Lyttelton, who, in spite of their engagement, still desired to support the continued employment of the British troops in the Low Countries, at a general meeting of the Opposition found themselves alone, and so agreed to give a silent vote with their associates.

It is probable that this incident produced alienation as it certainly wrought friction between Pitt and Cobham. In the ensuing year we find Cobham describing Pitt as a young man of fine parts, but narrow, ignorant of the world, and dogmatical.[1] Two years afterwards Cobham went further, and described him as a wrong-headed fellow, whom he had had no regard for.[2] So we may well conjecture that from this time there was but little confidence between Pitt and the patron of the cousinhood; a great emancipation, though not wholly a gain for Pitt.

Jan. 19, 1744. On the vote of 393,773*l.* to maintain the 16,000 Hanoverians during the coming year, there was no need for the restraint of silence, so Pitt railed with his customary bitterness against Carteret, who was the Hanover-troop minister, a flagitious taskmaster, with a party only composed of the 16,000 Hanoverians; and he ended his denunciation by wishing that Carteret were in the House, for then he would say ten times more. His speech was passionate and rhetorical, incomparably good of its kind. But the Government prevailed in the division by 271 to 226. This majority of forty-five was larger than had been anticipated, and was due to the incessant exertions of Walpole. He sustained the flagging spirits of the Ministry, who were on the point of abandoning the proposal. Newcastle, indeed, had blenched before the storm, and openly took part against the Hanoverians. But Walpole restored the fortune of the field. He stemmed the gathering retreat, put heart into the waverers, and used his personal credit with his old friends. Never in his own administration had he laboured any point with more zeal. 'The whole world,' writes his son Horace, 'nay, the Prince himself, allows that if Lord Orford had not come to town, the Hanover troops had been lost. They were, in effect, given up by all but Carteret.'[1]

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[1] Marchmont Papers, i. 80.

[2] Ib. i. 176.

So far as the House of Commons was concerned, this ended the hostilities against the Hanoverian troops, though the House of Lords continued the controversy with a debate in which Chesterfield, who outdid Pitt in violence, delivered a speech which was greatly admired. But a subsidy of 200,000*l.* had to be voted to the King of Sardinia under the treaty of Worms. This treaty, negotiated by the King and Carteret in Germany independently of the Home Government, was little relished by that Government, and offered a tempting target to the warriors of the Opposition. On a first motion for papers, Pitt was again prominent, though little of his speech survives. Alluding, however, to a secret

Jan. 1744.

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[1] To Mann, Jan. 24, 1744. Cf. Parl. Hist. xiii. 467 note.

convention attached to the treaty, which Carteret had signed but which Ministers had refused to ratify, he declared, 'I only wanted the sight of a convention, tacked to the treaty which that audacious hand had signed, to furnish matter for immediate impeachment.' On the actual vote the Government had only a majority of 62. Subsequent unreported debates furnished Pitt with opportunities of denouncing the Pelham brethren as subservient tools of Carteret. But the Government waxed stronger in proportion to the heat of opposition. On a vote of censure they had a majority of 114. Through these discussions Pitt passes like a phantom, foremost by all consent in debate, but without leaving any footprint of speech behind.

From these broils Parliament was now distracted by startling intelligence. By message to the House on February 15 (1744) the King apprised his faithful lieges that a French fleet was prowling in the Channel, and that the young Stuart Prince, Charles Edward, had arrived in France to join it. One of our vessels had met this squadron of seventeen men-of-war and four frigates so long ago as January 27, 'half seas over' between Brest and the Land's End, prowling apparently northwards. There was something of a panic: men remembered how the Dutch in 1667 had sailed up the Thames, and apprehended a repetition of that disgrace. The Jacobites began to raise their head, but stocks did not fall. The King's message announced that the 'eldest son of the Pretender to his Crown is arrived in France; and that preparations are making there to invade this kingdom in concert with disaffected persons here.' A loyal address was at once prepared, to which the Opposition moved an addition, promising an inquiry into the state of the Navy. The amendment was, of course, supported by Pitt, and, of course, defeated. But Pitt, as stout an anti-Jacobite as his grandfather, promised his adhesion to the address whether the amendment voted or not; and a few days later, on the presentation of papers, he supported the Government so warmly as to receive the public thanks of Pelham. But for once the interest was not in the Commons but the Lords. Newcastle had laid the papers before the House, and with his usual blundering ineptitude had allowed the House to pass to private business. Then Orford rose, and broke his long silence. With dignity and emotion he confessed that he had vowed to refrain from speech in that House, but that abstinence now would be a crime. He had heard the King's message, and had observed with amazement that that House was to be so wanting in respect as to leave it unanswered. Was our language so barren as to be unable to find words to the King at such a crisis; 'a time of distraction and confusion, a time when the greatest power in Europe is setting up a Pretender to his throne?'

'I have indeed particular reason to express my astonishment and my uneasiness on this occasion; I feel my breast fired with the warmest gratitude to a gracious and royal master whom I have so long served; my heart overflows with zeal for his honour, and ardour for the lasting security of his illustrious house. But, my lords, the danger is common, and an invasion equally involves all our happiness, all our hopes, and all our fortunes.'

In these passionate words the wary and unemotional Orford allowed his apprehension to overflow. He saw the work of his life, the keeping out of the Stuarts, compromised and endangered by the unpopularity of the throne, and the blunders of jobbing mediocrity. He perceived the danger which he had so long warded off now instant and imminent. The House was deeply moved. Newcastle with obvious mortification acknowledged his lapse, and the Chancellor hurriedly drafted an address. Even the Prince of Wales, whose hatred of Walpole was perhaps the deepest feeling of which his shallow nature was capable, was so stirred, that he rose and shook hands with the veteran Minister. Nay, as we are told by a chronicler blissfully unconscious of bathos, 'he revoked the prohibition which prevented the family of Lord Orford from attending his levee.' It was a dramatic occasion, worthy of being the last public appearance of Orford. The hard-bitten old statesman who had been baited for near a quarter of a century, and had always given his opponents as good as he had got, disappeared from the stage with a burst of passionate patriotism.

The end is so near that we may follow him thither. 1744. This speech was on the last day of February, and he was soon afterwards seized with a painful and mortal complaint; but in July he could not resist returning to Houghton for a final visit. There he remained till November, beset by anxious solicitations both from the King and from the Ministry, for he was the guide and stay of both. At last, though tortured with the stone, he consented to return to London at the urgent solicitation of his sovereign, then engaged in a desperate struggle to retain Carteret as Secretary of State. Even Carteret, his old enemy, in the stress of self-preservation sought his aid. Orford set out on November 19, and in four slow days of an agony which wrung even the practised nerves of Ranby, the surgeon (and it is difficult even now to read Ranby's narrative without emotion), he reached London. The crisis then was over, for he had put an end to it on his journey. A message despatched by the Pelhams had met him on the road and placed him in possession of the facts of the situation. He had at once written to advise the King to part with Carteret, and the King had instantly submitted.

This was Walpole's last act of power, but he remained in London to die. For four months he lingered under the hands of the surgeons, sometimes under opium, sometimes suffering tortures with equanimity and good humour. But even so his shrewd and cynical common sense did not desert him. Consulted by the Duke of Cumberland as to a marriage projected for him by the King, but repugnant to the Duke, the dying statesman advised him to consent to the marriage on condition of an ample and immediate establishment. 'Believe me,' he added, 'the marriage will not be pressed.' Walpole's knowledge of mankind left him only with his death.

His constancy, his courage, his temper, his unfailing resource, his love of peace, his gifts of management and debate, his long reign of prosperity will always maintain Walpole in the highest rank of English statesmen. Distinguished even in death, he rests under the bare and rustic pavement of Houghton Church, in face of the palace that he had reared and cherished, without so much as an initial to mark his grave. This is the blank end of so much honour, adulation, power, and renown. For a century and a half unconscious hobnails and pattens have ground the nameless stones above him, while mediocrities in marble have thronged our public haunts. His monument, unvoted, unsubscribed, but supreme, was the void left by his death, the helpless bewilderment of King and Government, the unwilling homage and retractation offered by his foes, the twenty years of peace and plenty represented by his name.

And here another illustrious name cannot but suggest itself, though it may seem difficult to bring into anything like a parallel the two great Sir Roberts, Walpole and Peel. Both were distinguished by the same cautious and pacific sagacity. But they differed by the whole width of human nature in temperament. Walpole belonged to the school of the cold blood, and Peel to that of the warm. This, perhaps, constitutes the most important touchstone in the characters of statesmen, and success usually lies with the colder temperament. Of this principle, Fox, who was warm blooded, presents the most remarkable illustration, and Gladstone, who was not less so, the most signal exception. Peel's conscience, moreover, was as notably sensitive as Walpole's was notoriously the reverse. But though thus essentially apart, there is one capital point which the careers of Walpole and Pitt bear an almost exact resemblance to each other. Neither of them, strangely enough, reached his full height until his fall; neither acquired the full confidence of the country until he had lost that of Parliament; after having exercised almost paramount power as Ministers, neither ever reached his truest supremacy until he had left office for ever. Then, after a great catastrophe which had seemed to demolish them, it was perceived that they had soared above the mist into a higher air, clear of passion and interest; whence, though with scarce a following and without the remotest idea of a return to office, they spoke with an authority which they had never possessed when their word was law to an obedient majority in the Commons; an authority derived from experience and wisdom, without any lingering suspicion of self-interest. They lived in reserve, and only broke their self-imposed silence when the highest interests of the country seemed to forbid them to maintain it. Walpole, it is true, had to do his work mainly behind the scenes, while Peel did it conspicuously in Parliament; but the position was the same. If their eulogist had to choose the supreme period in the lives of both Walpole and Peel, he would select, not the epoch of their party triumphs, but the few exalted judicial years which elapsed between their final resignation and their death. It may seem a strain of language to use the word 'judicial,' for Walpole remained the oracle and stay of Whiggery, while Peel extended his consistent protection to the weak ministry of Lord John Russell. But Peel's protection of Russell was given in defiance of party to secure the Free Trade which he deemed vital, and Walpole's guidance of Whiggery was in disinterested support of men he disliked and despised because he deemed Whiggery, or at least opposition to Jacobitism, not less vital. Free Trade and Whiggery were, in the opinion of the two statesmen, essential to avert the revolutions which the opposite systems would have involved.

This seems a digression, but at this time Pitt and Walpole were not far apart; they secretly acknowledged each other's power and merit. Pitt had already begun to appreciate the solid sagacity of Walpole, and to repent of some random invective. Walpole saw the rhetorical boy developing into the man of the future, and was more and more anxious to enlist him. ‘Sir Robert Walpole,’ said Pitt in Parliament at a later period, ‘thought well of me, and died at peace with me. He was a truly English minister.’[1]

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[1] Orford, ii. 132.

CHAPTER XI.

SOON after this memorable debate France formally declared war against Great Britain in a document reciting the injuries sustained by France at the hands of the 'King of England, Elector of Hanover,' and faction was for the moment laid on one side, though Pitt, while supporting the Government, managed to declare that perdition would attend Carteret as the 'rash author of those measures which have produced this disastrous, impracticable war.' Still Parliament adjourned with comparative harmony in May. Before it met again two events occurred of the greatest importance to Pitt. March 1744.

The first was the death of that vigorous old termagant Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. All through life she had been more bellicose, though with less success, than her illustrious husband, and of late years had devoted her peculiar powers of hatred to Walpole. This bitterness extended even beyond the grave, for by a codicil dated two months before her death she bequeathed legacies to the two men who had most distinguished themselves by their attacks on that Minister. One was Chesterfield, to whom she left 20,000*l.*; the other was Pitt, to whom she left 10,000*l.*, 'for the noble defence he made for the support of the laws of England, and to prevent the ruin of his country.' Moreover, she seems to have bequeathed to him her 'manor in the

County of Buckingham, late the estate of Richard Hampden Esq: and leasehold in Suffolk; and lands etc. in Northampton.'[1] Pitt, in acknowledging the bequest to Marchmont, her executor, demurely and ambiguously replies: 'Give me leave to return your Lordship my thanks for the obliging manner in which you do me the honour to inform me of the Duchess of Marlborough's great goodness to me. The sort of regard I feel for her memory I leave to your Lordship's heart to suggest to you.'[2] Nor was this legacy all, for she settled her Wimbledon estate on her favourite grandson John Spencer, and after him on his only son; should that only son die without issue, it was to be divided between Chesterfield and Pitt. She, moreover, induced John Spencer to make a will bequeathing his own Sunderland estates to Pitt after his own sickly son.[3] Two years afterwards Spencer himself died at the age of thirty-seven 'because he would not be abridged of those invaluable blessings of an English subject, brandy, small beer and tobacco,'[4] so that only a child stood between Pitt and this great inheritance. Fortunately the splendid contingency did not take effect. For Chesterfield died without legitimate issue, and the Pitts have long been extinct; but the descendants of John Spencer's only son have been men of a purity of character and honour which have sweetened and exalted the traditions of English public life.

The legacy was opportune in more respects than one. It came as a solace to Pitt, who was desperately ill at

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[1] Thomson's Life of the Duchess of Marlborough, ii. 571–2.

[2] Marchmont Papers, ii. 338.

[3] H. Walpole to Montagu, June 24, 1746. Cf. Grenville Papers, i. 131. Camelford MS.

[4] H. Walpole to Mann, June 20, 1746.

Bath with gout in his stomach, which the waters were unavailing to remove; his friends indeed feared that he would be disabled for life. It also made him independent. Bolingbroke indeed thought it made him too independent.[1] Cynics soon declared it to be timely from another point of view, for immediately after the Duchess's death there was a crisis which was to put an end to Pitt's opposition and so to his claims on her sympathies. Carteret fell, and with his fall disappeared the object of Cobham's hatred and Pitt's philippics. The tempting contrast between Pitt receiving a legacy as the leading member of the Opposition, and Pitt immediately reconciled to the Ministry, and so ceasing to be a 'Patriot,' could not escape satire. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams lost no time in penning the coarse but vigorous lampoon which depicts the ghost of the old Duchess appearing to Pitt. 'Return, base villain, my retaining fee,' says the spectre, reminds the legatee that even Judas returned the wage of betrayal, and leaves him to the 'lash of lost integrity.'[2] But these taunts were wide of the mark. It was not Pitt's integrity that had disappeared, but the object of his opposition, now that Carteret had fallen.

The story of that fall is material to the life of Pitt; it is that second event of importance to him at this time to which we have alluded. We have seen that Walpole's last journey to London was caused by the King's struggle to retain Carteret whom the Pelhams insisted on removing. This indeed was a matter of necessity for them, as they could never enjoy real power while Carteret engrossed the

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[1] Marchmont Papers, i. 70.

[2] Works of Sir C. H. Williams, 1822, ii. 152.

King's confidence. Moreover, owing to the ill success of the Austro-British alliance during 1744 in operations with which he was identified he had become extremely unpopular. He himself was dissatisfied with his position, for though he had the ear of the King he was constantly outvoted in the Cabinet. 'Things cannot go on as they are,' he said to the ruling brother. 'I will not submit to be overruled and outvoted on every point by four to one. If you will undertake the Government, do so. If you cannot or will not I will.' This rash declaration of war sealed his fate. As a matter of fact the main division in the Cabinet of which we have record at this time was nine to four; but the majority was no doubt steady and inflexible against Carteret. The brothers now concentrated their energies on his overthrow. But before making any open attack on so strong a position, they wisely endeavoured to secure new sources of strength by negotiation with the Opposition.

During the year 1744 the leaders of the Opposition had reunited, 'upon one principle,' says the malignant Glover, 'which was to get into place.' This may fairly be said, without disparagement, to be the legitimate object of all Oppositions. In any case these politicians may well have realised that divided and scattered they were impotent, and they may have desired to make themselves felt in Parliament with or without office. So they appointed a committee of nine to treat with the Government. The junto, as it was termed in the jargon of that day, consisted of Bedford, Chesterfield, Gower, Cobham, Pitt, Lyttelton, Waller, Bubb, and Sir John Hinde Cotton.[1] This powerful body was approached by Carteret, always tardy and unskilful

[1] Glover, 30.

in such negotiations; but he had been anticipated by the brethren in power, who, in such intrigues, displayed all the skill that he lacked. He obtained, however, the powerful mediation of the Prince of Wales, who had a regard for him. Carteret's offers were liberal enough. He offered that the administration should be transformed, and places found for all of them; but they replied that they could make no terms with him. He turned, as we have seen, to Walpole in his despair, but in vain. Every hole was stopped. The Pelhams had secured both Walpole and the Committee.

Five of the junto, including Pitt and Lyttelton, were, it is said, in favour of joining the Pelhams without any stipulation. The minority, including Cobham, who considered that the pass had been sold, and who cursed the less scrupulous tactics of the majority, were for making conditions as regards future policy. However, all, both of the majority and the minority, were brought into the scheme; Cobham, who received a regiment, having, it is said, also obtained an assurance from Newcastle that the interests of Hanover should be subordinated to the interests of Great Britain. Bedford became First Lord of the Admiralty; Gower, Privy Seal; Waller, Cofferer; Lyttelton, a Lord of the Treasury; Bubb, Treasurer of the Navy; and Cotton, a notorious Jacobite, Treasurer of the Chambers. It should be added, however, that the narrative of this negotiation, however probable it may appear, rests on the doubtful authority of Glover, who is too venomous to be trustworthy. But in any case it is not necessary to condemn the Committee, even if Glover's statement be accepted as fact. Should so powerful a body of men enter the feeble Government of the Pelhams, they might well feel confident of controlling its policy with or without previous stipulation. A severer judgment may be passed when it is seen that the policy remained substantially unaltered, and that Pitt found himself able to discriminate between Carteret's policy with Carteret in office, and the same policy with Carteret out of office.

Fortified by this treaty, which included, of course, places for Pitt and Chesterfield, to be given when the King could be induced to give them, the Pelhams executed their stroke of state; and having, as we have seen, made sure of the oracle at Houghton to which the King was sure to have recourse, they sent the Chancellor to the King to inform him of the determination of the entire Cabinet to resign unless he would remove Carteret. Still the King could not be brought to abandon his favourite Foreign Minister and his favourite foreign policy. It was not until Orford gave the decision against Carteret that the Sovereign succumbed, three weeks after the delivery by the Pelhams of their ultimatum.

The fall of Carteret left the brothers, Newcastle and Pelham, absolute masters of the situation. The King had been completely defeated, and had sullenly to submit. He would scarcely speak to his Ministers. When he broke silence it would be to say, 'I have done all you asked me, I have put all the power into your hands, and I suppose you will make the most of it.' To that Hardwicke, the Lord Chancellor, with more than legal subtlety replied, 'The disposition of places is not enough if your Majesty takes pains to show the world that you disapprove of your own work.' This was more than the King could endure.

'My work!' he broke out; 'I was forced, I was threatened.' The Chancellor was shocked at these expressions. He knew of nothing of the kind. Such harshness was utterly alien to the ministerial mind. The mere idea of compulsion was shocking to it. 'No means were employed but what have been used in all times, the humble advice of your servants supported by such reasons as convinced them that the measure was necessary for your service.' This was the legal and fastidious method of describing the threatened strike of the Ministry in the previous November.

Carteret resigned in the last week of November (1744), and the Pelhams used their victory wisely and well by building up during the following month a strong administration on a large basis. It comprised men of all parties, Whigs, Tories, even Jacobites, forgotten Whigs, forgotten Tories, forgotten Jacobites, and was called in the canting phrase of that day the Broad Bottom Administration, as being a coalition of all parties. The only flaw in it was that it omitted the only men worth having. Among the new officials were George Grenville and George Lyttelton, who became subordinate Lords of the Treasury and Admiralty. 'Do what you will,' Cobham had said, 'provided you take care of my boys,' from whom Pitt now seemed to be excluded; for Cobham found him positive and unbending, differing sometimes, it may be presumed, from Cobham. When complete, this Ministry was so comprehensive as to annihilate opposition, and render the next few years unprecedentedly placid and dull from the parliamentary point of view.

Outside the forgotten worthies who were provided with places, there towered the two memorable men, Pitt and Chesterfield, the one great and the other considerable. Against them the King remained implacable. But he had at last to yield to the admission of Chesterfield. At first 'he shall have nothing,' had said the King, 'trouble me no more with such nonsense.' But now Chesterfield was to combine the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland with a special embassy to the Hague. On Pitt alone was the veto still absolute. And yet he was the only man whom the Ministers really dreaded.[1]

The Pelhams, through Cobham, had promised him the Secretaryship at War, on which his heart was set; but they were unable to fulfil their pledge, and soothed him for the time with promises that they would persevere in pressing him upon the Sovereign. With these fine words Pitt professed himself satisfied, and promised support, all the more readily as he knew himself to be inevitable. In the meantime, however, he gave up the only post he held, a course to which he was impelled both by the Marlborough legacy and the fall of Carteret; for while the first made him independent of salary, the second had alienated the Prince of Wales. So in April (1745) he resigned his groomship of the bedchamber, and met Parliament in the unadorned character of the most powerful private individual in the country.

On the army estimates he spoke for the first time, and with vehemence, as a supporter of the Government. On this occasion, too, he first utilised the apparatus of gout with the demeanour of a graceful invalid, whose end was approaching. Were it to be the last day of his life, he exclaimed, he would spend it in the House of Commons, since he judged the condition of his country to be worse than that of his own health. Formerly these expressions would have meant that the Government was ruining the nation. But now, he explained, that though Carteret had nearly wrecked the kingdom, the present object was, by connecting Hanover with Holland, to arrive at a prompt and fair pacification. He paid warm compliments to Pelham on his patriotism and capacity for business, and commended his Government with oblique and friendly expressions directed towards the King. A dawn of salvation to this country had broken forth (which, apparently, had hitherto been obscured by the form of Carteret), and he would follow it as far as it would lead him. His 'fulminating eloquence,' we are told, 'silenced all opposition.'[1]

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[1] Marchmont Papers, i. 67, 172. It was said that Harrington, from an interest in Lady Yonge, wife of the actual incumbent of the office, did his best to prevent Pitt's becoming Secretary for War. Ib. 97. But there was a more majestic obstacle.

In February 1745 a question arose of peculiar delicacy for Pitt. Through one of the compromises sometimes required by political emergency the question of the employment of the Hanoverians, against which Pitt was so strongly pledged, was arranged by transferring them to Maria Theresa, with an extra subsidy to enable her to pay them. This somewhat transparent artifice was boldly and dexterously defended by Pitt himself. On such occasions it is well not to hesitate or refine, and Pitt spoke without visible qualms. 'It was,' he said, 'a meritorious and popular measure, which did honour to the minister who advised it, and the Prince, who so graciously vouchsafed to follow it, and must give pleasure to every honest heart. As to what had been thrown out that the Queen of Hungary might take them into her pay, when they were dismissed from ours, what of that? She was at liberty to take them or not. They would not be forced on her, but God forbid that these unfortunate troops should by our votes be proscribed at every court in Europe.' It was enough that, 'by his Majesty's wisdom and goodness,' they were no longer voted annually as a part of our army, and so forth.[1]

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[1] Parl. Hist. xiii. 1054–6.

It is obvious from the meagre report that Pitt was now as copious in his praise of the King as he had formerly been niggard. His Sovereign had become wise and good and gracious; the Hanoverian troops, which had been so short a time ago cowardly and contemptible troops, were now unfortunate and meritorious, well worthy the attention and employment of Maria Theresa. One or two members could not help smiling; they called the measure collusive, and declared that if we were to pay the Hanoverians at all it were better to pay them directly, when they would at least be under our direction and control, than through the Queen of Hungary, when they would not. It is not on record that any one asked what advantage would be reaped by the taxpayer under the method proposed, when he would pay at least as much as before, but without the least check as to the way in which the money was spent. Nevertheless, there were complaints enough. Pitt must have hinted that it was better that they should fight under the Hungarian flag than the British, as they did not fight in harmony by the side of British troops; for this called up a Northumbrian baronet to explain that this was contrary to the fact, and that he should raise the point in a motion. Pitt at once rose again, not in his high line, but 'with all the art and temper imaginable,' soothed and complimented the honest member, hinted that his motion would only serve the purposes of Carteret, whom they both rejoiced to see removed, and generally allayed the debate with complete success.[1]

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[1] Parl. Hist. xiii. 1176.

This is again a notable mark in his career. For the first time he appears, not as the fierce hero of declamation and invective, but as the dexterous official diplomatist, coaxing and reassuring. He was fast moving onwards.

The official character of Pitt's speeches is all the more marked because there was little to commend and much to attack in the conduct of the Ministry, which had, to say the least, been singularly unfortunate. The disastrous battle of Fontenoy was not redeemed by the capture of Louisbourg, a gallant affair for which local volunteers and local enterprise, rather than the Government, deserve the credit. And now during the Parliamentary recess from May to October there suddenly appeared a fresh danger, the one against which Walpole's policy had been mainly directed for a generation. On August 19, Charles Edward, eldest son of the exiled Prince of Wales, and grandson of King James II., raised the standard of civil war at Glenfinnan; on September 17 he was living in the palace of his ancestors at Holyrood; four days afterwards he completely defeated the forces sent against him. Had he at once marched South he might well have reached London, and had he reached London the face of history in this island might have been changed. The Cabinet was panic-stricken, not merely at the advance of Charles, but at the anger of their legal Sovereign, who seemed likely to recall

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[1] Parl. Hist. xiii. 1177.

Carteret to his side. Dutch troops were hastily fetched over and sent to the North, and English troops from Flanders followed. Had these reinforcements been detained by contrary winds but a few weeks Pelham declared that London could not have been defended against the Jacobites. Two days before the victory of Charles Edward, Henry Fox wrote that 'had five thousand (French) troops landed in any part of this island a week ago, I verily believe the entire conquest would not have cost them a battle.'

But Charles contented himself with a reign at Holyrood of six weeks, and this delay lost him his chances of success. When Parliament met on October 17 he was still in Edinburgh, but adequate measures had been taken to render his enterprise abortive. All this does not concern Pitt, except as giving him an opportunity of expressing his devoted loyalty to George II.; but while Charles Edward was marching on Derby a desperate struggle was going on which related entirely to him. In the new session he had begun to show signs of irritation and of impatience with the Government; the emollients of the Pelhams began to lose their virtue, and he was determined not to be fooled any longer. His amiability had disappeared, and though his speeches are unreported, it is evident that the Ministers were now made to feel the terrors of his tongue. 'Yesterday,' writes Horace Walpole, 'they had another baiting from Pitt, who is ravenous for the place of Secretary at War: they would give it him: but as preliminary, he insists on a declaration of our having nothing to do with the Continent,' a stipulation which reads strangely enough by the light of the years to come. The Pelhams saw that they could no longer defer the fulfilment of their promises, and that it was necessary to approach the King. The moment was singularly unfavourable. The King had never forgiven the compulsion put on him to dismiss Carteret, nor the fact of his separation from Carteret. He had shrewdness enough to see that in ability and grasp of affairs Carteret towered above the other ministers except the Chancellor; and he despised Newcastle, who was principally thrown into contact with him. It was a shame, he declared, that a man who was not fit to be a chamberlain at the pettiest of German courts should be forced on the nation and on the Crown as a principal minister. All through 1745 the royal resentment smouldered, though it was kept in suspense by the rebellion. But when that movement lost in importance and became clearly doomed, the King felt more free to display his feelings. Foreign policy, with which we are not here concerned, was part of his grievance; but the main cause of irritation was the threatened intrusion of Pitt on his councils. And yet this was obviously impending and even inevitable. Pitt, at first so patient, had begun to show his teeth in public, and probably in private as well. The crisis could not be any longer avoided.

In the preceding autumn there had been conferences between the Pelhams on the one side and Pitt and Cobham on the other. On November 20, 1745, Newcastle records a meeting at which Pitt put forward his demands, and 'apprehended great difficulties in bringing about what we so much desired,' his accession to office. His conditions were finally melted down to an extension of the Place Bill so as to exclude from Parliament all officers in the Army under the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and in the Navy below the rank of captain; the removal of all the remaining adherents of Carteret, notably the two Finches, from Court; and a 'total alteration of the foreign system, by feeding only the war on the Continent, acting there as auxiliaries, and particularly by confining all the assistance we should give to the Dutch to the bare contingent of 10,000 men; but to increase our navy, and to act as principals at sea in the war against France and Spain. For a peace with France, at present, was not to be thought of.'

The first condition presented no complications. The second seemed inexpedient on grounds of prudence and decency. The third presented more difficulty. Newcastle had two long conferences upon it, first with Pitt and then with Cobham. Finally a meeting was held between the Chancellor, Hardwicke, Harrington, Pelham, and Newcastle on one side, and Gower, Bedford, Cobham, and Pitt on the other.[1]

The situation of affairs at this moment was this: Charles Edward was marching from Holyrood towards London. The French had won Fontenoy and were overrunning the Austrian Netherlands, without difficulty and almost without resistance. Maria Theresa was about to conclude peace at Dresden (December 25, 1745) by a renewed cession of Silesia. This was the juncture at which the Pelhams resolved to force on a Cabinet crisis in order to obtain the services of Pitt. The fact at least displays the value and importance of the personage who was the subject of contest.

The real point at issue between the Government and Pitt was this: The Government wished to give general and unlimited assurances of assistance, amounting almost to a guarantee, to the Dutch. Pitt wished the assistance definitely limited to a force of 10,000 men; and that we should then, free of all other continental complications (for both parties agreed that Austria must come to terms with Prussia), carry on a purely naval war against France and Spain.

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[1] Bedford is ranked by Newcastle among the Cobham deputation, though he was First Lord of the Admiralty at the time. Perhaps he was the honest broker.

At this conference between the Ministers and the Cobham plenipotentiaries, Newcastle was the spokesman of the Government. He declared that the Queen of Hungary had forfeited her rights to any further assistance, and that we were about to tell her that she could have no more from us. On this point all were apparently agreed, so that Austria was eliminated from the discussion. The case of Holland was, however, in the opinion of Ministers, different; her existence was necessary to us, and we must proffer help to her, if only to prevent her concluding a separate peace with France. But an offer limited to 10,000 men would not prevent such a peace; we must show a general disposition to assist. Lord Cobham answered that this sort of defensive war could never bring about a peace, that the Dutch would evade their engagements, and we should find ourselves with as formidable a continental war on our hands as if we were again actively supporting Maria Theresa. Pitt warmly supported Cobham; spoke strongly against the Dutch; 'insisted that 10,000 men in our present circumstances was a generous and noble succour. . . . He insisted on the necessity of coming to some precision as to the contingent in order to satisfy the people; and talk'd much of the great impression we could make upon France, when our efforts were singly at sea.'

At this point Bedford and Gower separated themselves from Cobham and Pitt. It was not possible, they said, to increase our navy. In fine, the plenipotentiaries of the Government pointed out that if France and Holland came to terms, we might have France and Spain free to devote their whole energies against us, and, as the others chimed in, 'they might easily keep the rebellion on foot for years, if not destroy us quite.'

Cobham and Pitt, however, departed unshaken, though with great civility and good-humour. Newcastle glumly sums up the position. The King may say that he was ready to take these gentlemen into the Government, but, as they will not come in, ask if the Ministry will thereupon desert him? 'To which, to be sure, no other answer can be given but that we are not in a condition to carry it on. To depend upon my Lord Granville's friends to support this administration against Lord Granville is a contradiction in itself. To bring in Mr. Pitt against his own will is impossible. And, therefore, at present there seems to be nothing to be done, if Mr. Pitt is determined (which, I should still hope, he would not finally be), but with your lordship (Chesterfield), the Duke of Bedford, my Lord Gower, to get as many individuals as we can to carry us through till the rebellion is over; and then we shall be at liberty to take such part as we shall think most consistent with our own honour and the public service.'[1]

Observe: without Pitt we are not in a condition to carry on. That is what this letter amounts to, for of Bedford and Gower the Ministry felt sure, and Cobham was an auxiliary who was on and off like a freebooter. The adhesion of Pitt, a private member, poor and almost unconnected, was vital to a Government which in the public opinion had already collected every possible element of strength. So matters continued till the meeting of Parliament after the Christmas recess in January 1746. Pitt held aloof, and had no further commerce with the Government.

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[1] Newcastle to Chesterfield, Nov. 20, 1745. Add. MSS. 32705.

A few days before Parliament met, however, he went to the Duke of Bedford, inquired as to the foreign policy of the Government, showed a disposition to come into it, and expressed a wish that some minister would talk it over with Lord Cobham, 'into whose hands they had now finally committed themselves.'[1] On this hint Newcastle hurried to Cobham, who was reasonable, and 'seemed very desirous to come into us and bring his Boys, as he called them. . . . The terms were, Mr. Pitt to be Secretary at War; Lord Barrington in the Admiralty; and Mr. James Grenville to have an employment of £1000 a year. He flung out Lord Denbigh, the Duke of Queensbury, and some Scotch politicians, but not as points absolutely to be insisted on.'

It is useful and edifying to be allowed behind the scenes in this way; for such negotiations are now, one would imagine, obsolete, or as nearly obsolete as the corruption of our fallen nature will allow. Still, one may drop a tear in passing over the 'Scotch politicians,' so lightly proffered, so lightly dismissed. But let Newcastle continue his narrative. 'Upon this I opened the Budget to the King, which was better received than I expected, and the only objection was to the giving Mr. Pitt the particular office of Secretary at War.' Still the Pelhams pressed the appointment. Then the goaded and distressed monarch determined to make a desperate effort to break from the dominion of the Whig hierarchy, so as to carry out his own foreign policy, and avoid the admission of Pitt to his counsels. At this juncture Bath gained admittance to the Closet, and fortified the King's repugnance. He 'represented against the behaviour of his ministers in forcing him in such a manner to take a disagreeable man into a particular office, and thereby dishonouring his Majesty both at home and abroad; and encouraging the King to resist it by offering him the support of his friends in so doing.'[1] The King caught at this forlorn hope, and gave Bath full power to form a new Government. Bath released himself from his vow against holding office, accepted the charge with alacrity, instantly summoned Carteret, and obtained from the City a promise of supplies on terms more favourable than those to which Pelham had agreed. Carteret, it need scarcely be said, joyfully acceded. The misfortune was that there was no one else who did. The Pelham ministry resigned in a body. Bath kissed hands as First Minister, and received the seals of the Secretaries of State to transmit to Carteret, who was ill. The new Secretary at once announced by circular his appointment to the foreign ministers. But there all ended. When old Horace Walpole was told that this ministry was settled he shrewdly remarked: 'I presume in the same manner as what we call a settlement in Norfolk; when a house is cracked from top to bottom and ready to fall, we say it is settled.'[2] Winnington was to have been the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. Thrice did the King press the seal into his hand, and thrice did Winnington return it. ‘Your new ministers, sir, can neither support Your Majesty nor themselves,’ said he.[1] He insisted, moreover, that they could not depend on more than 31 peers and 80 commoners. History does not confirm even so moderate a computation, but it may be presumed that this was the Court contingent on which any minister could count.

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[1] Newcastle to Chesterfield, Feb. 18, 1746, in Coxe's Pelham Adm. i. 292.

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[1] Newcastle to Chesterfield, Feb. 18, 1746, in Coxe's Pelham Adm. i. 293.

[2] Coxe's Lord Walpole, ii. 142.

Harrington, one of the actual Secretaries of State, on whom the King confidently reckoned for assistance in the new arrangement, resigned, after a stormy scene with his master, who never forgave him. Every one resigned or tried to resign, and there was no one to fill their places. To Pelham himself Carteret had made overtures; but Pelham told the King that the Whig junto would have nothing to do with Bath or Carteret. At last, the only measure left to the hapless monarch was to shut himself up and forbid his door to the crowd that sought admittance in order to give up their keys and staves and official insignia. He was soon compelled to send for Bath and to tell him that it would not do. Bath exhorted him to be firm, and offered by means of the Prince of Wales to secure Tory support. But with Charles Edward still in arms in the Highlands, the King could not bring himself to approach the foes of his house, and under no circumstances would he owe salvation to his son. Both Princes of Wales, the real and the titular, were almost equally repugnant to him. Another version of the story states that it was Bath who told the King that the project would not work. It matters little which is correct, for the position was self-evident, but George was probably stouter than Bath.

Bath kissed hands on February 10 (1746). Two days afterwards his ministry had come to an end, and the King had sent for Pelham to return. Carteret saw the humour of the situation and laughed it away; he owned it a mad escapade, but was all the more ready to repeat it. It was all over, the King had to surrender to the Whigs, who condescended to resume the seals on easy terms, which were the proscription of Bath's following and the admission of Pitt. The first condition was simple enough, it was the natural result of Bath's defeat. *Vae victis.* 'We immediately desired,' writes Newcastle, 'that the Court might be purged of all their friends and dependents, that Lord Bath might be out of the Cabinet Council, the Duke of Bolton, Lord Berkeley of Stratton, Mr. William Finch, the Vice-Chamberlain, Mr. Edward Finch, the Groom of the Bedchamber, Mr. Boone, and the Lord Advocate of Scotland (which were all that were left of that sort), should be removed.' We have an impression that, in spite of all, 'the black, funereal Finches' were preserved to the Bedchamber and to the card table, but that does not concern this narrative.

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[1] Coxe's Lord Walpole, ii. 133.

As to the second condition, it was inevitable sooner or later, and took place in the form least offensive to the Sovereign. But the ministerial crisis and the desperate venture with Bath and Carteret testify to the formidable position of Pitt and to the equal aversion of the Sovereign. In no less an instance than Pitt's could this repulsion have been overcome.

Pitt himself had begged that his pretensions to the Secretaryship at War should not act as an obstacle to an accommodation with the King, for there was evidently nothing so repugnant to the Sovereign. The King had said first that he would not have him in that office at any price, then that he would use him ill if he had it, then that he would not admit him to his presence to do the business of the office if he had it.[1]

There is, if the matter be candidly considered, no just cause of reproach in this obstinacy. George II. was a gentleman, and a brave gentleman. The Hanoverians were his own people, of his own blood and language. Hanover was the home in which he had been brought up, the paradise to which he always looked longingly from his splendid exile in England. The King's personal courage Pitt had publicly and wantonly aspersed; Hanover and the Hanoverians he had held up to every form of public hatred and contempt. One cannot be surprised that George II. would have nothing to say to him except under compulsion, and refused, as between one gentleman and another, to have personal relations with him. As a constitutional ruler his duty was another matter, but he would not perform a duty so odious except in the last resort. He ignored Pitt even after Pitt had entered office. It was four years after Pitt became Paymaster that Newcastle, as the result of long pressure or intrigue, induced the King even to speak to him. This was considered a triumph for the ministry.[2]

Perhaps the Pelhams understood the King's feelings. Pitt did without doubt. The King was not now pressed beyond endurance, and Pitt was content for the moment with the joint Vice Treasurership of Ireland, in which his partner was Walpole's son-in-law, Cholmondeley. The office was understood to be lucrative, but he was not destined to hold this Mar. 6, 1746.

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[1] Newcastle to Chesterfield, Feb. 18, 1746.

[2] Orford, i. 110. Walpole to Mann, April 2, 1750.

sinecure for more than a few weeks. He had scarce time to ask for exemption from the land tax of four shillings in the pound which was charged on his salary for not residing in Ireland, or for admission to the Irish Privy Council, both customary requests.[1] Two months after he was gazetted Winnington died, and Pitt succeeded him in the rich office of Paymaster-General. This is a Privy Councillor's place, so Pitt had to be admitted to the King's presence to take the oath. The King shed tears as Pitt knelt before him. A constitutional Sovereign has these bitter moments.

During the interval between the two appointments Pitt had to pay a heavy fee for the first. A vote was demanded for 18,000 Hanoverians to be taken into British pay. Cobham's young men, one of whom, afterwards Lord Temple, 'had declared in the House that he would seal it with his blood that he never would give his vote for a Hanoverian,' voted the money in silence. Pitt however was not content to play so abject a part. He stood boldly forth, speaking, said Pelham, his new chief, with the dignity of Wyndham, the wit of Pulteney, and the knowledge blended with judgment of Walpole. Walpole's son thought differently:

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[1] Cartwright to Pitt, Feb. 27, 1745 (Chatham MSS.). We obtain the exact salary more or less correctly from a lampoon.

'Hibernia, smile!
Thrice happy isle,
On thy blest ground
Twelve thousand pound
For Stanhope's found,
Three thousand clear
For Pitt a year;
So shalt thou thrive,
Industrious hive,
While these and more
Increase thy store.' Sir C. H. Williams, ii. 166.

Pitt, he declared, added 'impudence to profligacy; but no criminal at the Place de Grève was ever so racked as he was by Dr. Lee, a friend of Lord Granville, who gave him the question both ordinary and extraordinary.' Probably both accounts are true. Lee was one of the Prince of Wales's men, and Pitt's relations with his late master were strained to the point of rupture by his acceptance of office.

CHAPTER XII.

PITT was now to inhabit the Pay Office, and he gave notice to Ann, without any previous quarrel so far as we know, that they would henceforth live apart. In any case, Pitt's accession to office thus enabled him to put a convenient period to what had probably become a fretting and irksome arrangement; but Walpole notes at this time that there is gossip about 'the new Paymaster's ménage,' possibly Grattan's tradition of 'This House to Let.' This sort of chit-chat is, however, the inevitable accompaniment of a man in Pitt's position and need not again be dwelt upon. Two of his early patrons also quarrelled with him: the Prince of Wales and Cobham. But Pitt, for the moment at any rate, could afford to do without either. A more delicate question required his attention. There were habitual practices in the Pay Office which brought in immense profits to the Paymaster. It was the custom of that official to take poundage on all subsidies paid to foreign princes, and to use the great balances at his credit for his own purposes of speculation. As to this second method Pitt had no doubts, and rejected the idea. As to the first he seems, on entering upon office, to have consulted Pelham.[1] Pelham replied that Winnington had taken these perquisites, but that he himself when Paymaster had not; Pitt could do as he chose. 'Such a manner of stating it left scarce an option in any but the basest of mankind,' remarks Camelford with characteristic bitterness. Pitt at any rate did not hesitate, and refused to take a farthing beyond his salary, which, in truth, was splendid enough. But the indirect profits of the Paymastership, which earlier in the century had founded the dukedom of Chandos and the palace of Canons, and which later endowed the peerage of Henry Fox and the glories of his exquisite residence at Kensington, besides furnishing great fortunes for his graceless sons to squander at the gaming-table, were, as Dr. Johnson would have said, beyond the dreams of avarice. It was held in that day of loose political morality to be noble, if not unique, for a man with a patrimony of a hundred a year and a legacy of ten thousand pounds to refuse to receive such profits.[1]

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[1] Camelford.

Lord Camelford's statement may be taken in the main to be correct without adopting the sour inference which he draws. Pitt may well have asked Pelham as to the practice of the office and Pelham have replied in the sense indicated. If so, it was nearly as creditable to Pelham as to Pitt, for one was scarcely less needy than the other. Pelham was a gambler, and so wanted all the money he could get. He was a politician, and politicians in those days required money for their purposes almost as much as gamblers. Lord Camelford implies that had Pelham not answered as he did, Pitt would have taken the percentages and the balances. This is mere surmise. But, had he done so, he could not have been blamed. These perquisites were regarded as legitimate by the practice and opinion of the day; the balances were matters of public account. They made the Paymaster's office a great prize, a recognised source of immense profits. The fact remains that Pitt, or Pitt and Pelham, thought them improper, and refused to take them.

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[1] Cf. Underwood MSS. (Hist. MSS.), p. 405.

One signal difference must however be observed. Pelham abstained silently, the abstinence of Pitt was widely known. This notoriety may have been partly due to the fact that the King of Sardinia, having heard of Pitt's refusal to deduct the percentage on the Sardinian subsidy, sent to offer him a large present, which Pitt unhesitatingly declined. But there was another reason, which colours Pitt's whole life, and which may therefore well be noted here. His light was never hid under any sort of bushel, and he did not intend that it should be. He already saw that his power lay with the people, and that it was based not merely on his genius and eloquence, but on a faith in his public spirit and scrupulous integrity. His virtues were his credentials, and it was necessary that they should be conspicuous. Pulteney and St. John had wielded greater Parliamentary power, yet Pulteney and St. John had perished from want of character. Character he saw was the one necessary thing, but character must be known to be appreciated. Pitt was perhaps the first of those statesmen who sedulously imbue the public with a knowledge of their merit. He can scarcely be called an advertiser, but he was the ancestor of advertisers. Other statesmen no doubt had paid their pamphleteers. Pitt paid nobody, but he inspired; he had hangers-on who clung to the skirts of his growing fortune. This is not to imply that he had not a genuine scorn of meanness and corruption and the baser arts of politics. He had to use them through others; he had to ally himself with Newcastle and his gang; he could not govern otherwise. But he was anxious that the public should know that he was something apart from and above these politicians. His was a real but not a retiring purity; a white column rather than a snowdrop. This was all part of his essentially theatrical character, which he had found successful in Parliament, and which gradually absorbed him, with unhappy results.

But there was another reason why it was necessary that Pitt should advertise his virtue on this occasion. He was a patriot joining the Court party, a member of the Opposition accepting a place, which, with all deductions, had a fixed and ample salary. It was not possible for him, though his friends were already established in office, to join them without some loss of popularity. It was difficult for him to keep his shield untarnished in the royal armoury. The morose Glover states that he brought himself to the level of Lord Bath in public disfavour by his acceptance of office. Pitt himself, at the time of his bitter mortification in 1754, writes to Lord Hardwicke of his 'bearing long a load of obloquy for supporting the King's measures,' without the smallest abatement of the King's hostility, and about the same time describes himself as having parted with that weight in the country which arose from his independent opposition to the measures of the Government. He must indeed have counted the cost. It seemed obvious and in the nature of things that Lytteltons, Grenvilles, and Cobhams should follow the other patriots into office when opportunity offered; they had no doubt barked loudly at ministers, but they belonged to the families which always governed the country, and it was proper, indeed inevitable, that they should take up their predestined positions on the Treasury Bench. But Pitt had stood on a different pedestal. He had been marked out by Walpole for punishment and by the King for exclusion. He had thundered against the King and the King's trusted Ministers, the Walpoles and the Carterets, with a voice that overbore all others, and which apparently could not be silenced. The people seemed at last to have found an incorruptible champion. Then suddenly he was muzzled with a sinecure. Had he insisted on the Secretaryship of War and wrenched it from the reluctant sovereign, the position would have been totally different. But to pass into the sleek silence of the Vice Treasurership, and almost to disappear from sight or hearing for eight years, seemed a moral collapse. It is not one of the least remarkable features of Pitt's career that he should have survived this lucrative obscurity.

It is indeed difficult to understand how so fierce and restless a spirit could have endured the passive existence to which he had restrained himself by the acceptance of office. We seem to hear a growl but a few months after he had become Paymaster. 'In the gloomy scene which, I fear, is opening in public affairs for this disgraced country,' he writes to George Grenville in October 1746; not a cheerful tone for a young minister, but one not unfamiliar among those in subordinate positions. Still he could afford to wait. He probably contented himself with the reflection that King George could not last for ever, and flattered himself with an easy entrance to the councils of King Frederick. He could watch, too, with silent scorn, the miscarriages of his official superiors, confident that high office must come to him, as it were, of its own accord. Still, he had to wait long, and the death of Frederick as well as the longevity of the monarch were little less than disastrous to his calculations. It would have been better, of course, for his historical position had he refrained from taking a subordinate office, which restrained his independence, and deprived him of the peculiar lustre of his lonely power. In these days we ask ourselves what temptation could induce him to accept a post which seemed to offer nothing but salary in exchange for the exceptional splendour of his independent position? How was it worth his while to become Vice-Treasurer of Ireland? It cannot have been for money. He was notoriously indifferent to money (though his nephew casts doubts even on this), and he was better off as to money than he had ever been before, owing to the Marlborough legacy. It may have been that as his political associates had all joined the administration, he thought that his loneliness impaired his power, and he must certainly have felt that it was impossible for him to continue in active and effective opposition to a Government which included his closest friends. That would seem to be the chief and conspicuous reason. But there was another, as one may well suppose, which was not less potent. Office is the natural, legitimate and honourable object of all politicians who feel capable of doing good work as ministers, and even of some who do not. The instances to the contrary are so few as to prove the rule. Wilberforce and Burdett, Ashley (for Ashley, though not literally outside the category of officials, cannot be considered as one), and Cobden are the names that obviously present themselves. But Ashley and

Wilberforce had consecrated themselves to a high career of philanthropy which was incompatible with the bond of ministry. Burdett, long a popular idol and an orator of great power, a country gentleman of the best type, and personally agreeable even to those who differed from him, was probably held to be too advanced a demagogue to be even considered for an appointment. Cobden refused office at least twice; yet had he lived he could not have kept out of it. Bright, his illustrious political twin, the Castor to his Pollux, took it and liked it. In the eighteenth century we can think of no one but Pulteney. He, indeed, strictly speaking, is no exception, for as a youth he held a subordinate post. And though in the maturity of his powers he refused the first place when apparently he might have had it, he also solicited it when it was out of his reach.

Althorp too, in the last century, is a singular example. He led the House of Commons for four years as Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his popularity and ascendancy made him the real pivot of the Government. But he hated office with so deadly a hatred that he had the pistols removed from his room lest he should end his official career with them. He really comes in the list of exceptions to the rule that office is the goal of all capable politicians.

But Pitt had nothing in common with these men. He wished to be in office, and he knew that he would be a better minister than any there, even though he may not have felt already the confidence which he afterwards expressed that he alone could save England. How then was he to obtain a foothold in the ministry? The just repugnance of the King was, he knew, insurmountable, so long as he remained outside. But if admitted to office he might well hope much from his power of fascination, which was almost famous. The King was not an easy person for any man to charm; but Pitt no doubt felt that if he could once be placed in contact with His Majesty, he might be able to remove the royal prejudice; though in that he seems to have been wrong. He tried his hand on Lady Yarmouth, with whom at a later period he seems to have been on a familiar footing; but it is doubtful if she ever dispelled, though she may have mitigated, the King's hatred of Pitt.

Even failing the mollification of the King, he felt that by taking office he would have entered the official caste, and he would have placed his foot on one rung of the ladder of greatness. In accepting the Vice-Treasurership he had doubtless been promised the next post that was vacant, and was, as has been seen, given the Paymastership. He was thus reunited to all his political friends, and would form with them a solid proportion of the garrison of Downing Street, a proportion to be reckoned with. It would be strange indeed if in such a position and with such feeble superiors he did not make his way to some position of real business and power.

It must be remembered, too, that the state of affairs as regards office in the eighteenth century was very different from the present. Now, if a man be a bold and popular speaker, both in Parliament and on the platform, but more especially on the platform, he leaps into the Cabinet at once; he disdains anything else; a Vice-Treasurership such as Pitt accepted he would regard as an insult. But in the middle of the eighteenth century there was nothing of this. There was no such thing as platform speaking outside the religious movement. A man made himself prominent and formidable in Parliament, but that was a small part of the necessary qualifications for office. The Sovereign then exercised a control, not indeed absolute, but efficacious and material, on the selection of ministers. The great posts were mainly given to peers; while a peerage is now as regards office in the nature of an impediment, if not a disqualification. In those days an industrious duke, or even one like Grafton who was not industrious, could have almost what he chose. But most of the great potentates preferred to brood over affairs in company with hangers-on who brought them the news, or with their feudal members of parliament. Still they formed a vital element in the governments of that time. Pelham's administration at this very time contained five dukes: he himself was the only commoner in it, and he was a duke's brother. It was necessary to have a Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons, but all the other high offices could be held preferably by peers. The two Secretaries of State were both dukes. A brilliant commoner without family connection or great fortune was an efficient gladiator to be employed in the service of these princes, but he was not allowed to rise beyond a fixed line. The peers lived, as it were, in the steward's room, and the commoners in the servants' hall; in some parlour, high above all, sate the King.

Pitt, according to the practice of the twentieth century, would have received at least the highest office outside or, more probably, office within the Cabinet on the fall of Walpole, and he certainly would have been a Secretary of State or the equivalent before 1746. As it was, in that year he had to climb on hands and knees into a subordinate position. It had been difficult for him to get even that far at the cost of a ministerial crisis of capital importance. The veto of the King had certainly been the principal obstacle. But the iron rules of caste forbade any idea of office for Pitt at all commensurate with his importance. He had under the system in force to get in as he could, and into much the same sort of office as his inferior but more influentially connected colleagues, the Grenvilles, the Lytteltons, and the like.

There was another weighty consideration which pointed to prompt acceptance. Pitt had no time to spare. He was no longer in his first youth, he was approaching middle age. When he accepted this subordinate post he was thirty-eight; and thirty-eight, it may be said, when the lives of statesmen were comparatively short, was a more mature period in a career than it would be considered now. At the age when Pitt became Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, North was already Prime Minister. Pitt was now seven years older than Grafton when he became Prime Minister, and fifteen years older than his own son when he first led the House of Commons as Chancellor of the Exchequer; both, of course, under circumstances abnormally propitious. These figures show sufficiently not merely that Pitt's career was, so to speak, in arrear, but that the youthfulness of ministers in those days, under the favouring breezes of birth and connection, affords no standard of comparison for the possibilities of a poor country gentleman with no such advantages. Pitt was, indeed, rather old than young of his age. His sickly youth and his habitual infirmities had aged him beyond his years. But it must be noted in passing that, in spite of the dire impetuosity of his character, all his steps in life, except his entry into Parliament, were tardy and delayed. He was forty-six when he married, and forty-eight when he first entered the Cabinet; he was thirty-eight when he first obtained office. He moved slowly, but not patiently. His glowing nature, thrown back on itself, exacerbated by rebuffs and neglect, all fused into a fierce scorn, the *sæva indignatio* of Swift, gathered strength and intensity in its restrained progress, until it developed into a spirit not indeed amiable or attractive, but of indomitable and superhuman force. That was the process which was at work in the shade of subordinate office.

This consideration leads us to what is the best, and probably the true, explanation of this voluntary eclipse: that in taking office he was taking leave of his youth and of his past, and embarking on a new phase of his career. Up to this time he had, like a predatory animal, lived wholly on attack, and had given no thought to consistency, and little to his future. He had only been a rattling politician, determined to make his way, thinking only of the game, and of how to develop and display his powers of oratory. He had been content to adopt Cobham's enemies as his own, and had tried on them the temper of his virgin sword, without much caring who they were or why he attacked them, so long as they were sufficiently prominent to give notoriety to their assailant. His course had been one of brilliant recklessness and of striking eloquence; but at bottom it had been nothing but faction. There have been many such swashbucklers in our history, and there will be many more. But it is rare that, as in Pitt's case, they develop into something supreme. With Pitt these extravagancies had only been the frolics of genius. By burying himself in the sedateness and reticence of office, Pitt sought to break with his dazzling indiscretions, and mature himself for statesmanship. He retired behind a screen in order to change his dress. That, one may infer, was his design; that, certainly, was the effect.

To make an end of this topic, one may ask why Pitt, so fertile of invective himself, was not the subject of execration when he joined the Court. Great men no doubt may commit faults, even crimes, with impunity, for the lustre of their achievements throws a shadow over their errors. In such men it is recognised that all is usually on a colossal scale, deeds and misdeeds alike. As they are capable of gigantic successes, they are also capable of stupendous blunders. This is true of Pitt's whole career, but it does not explain the facility with which he was now able, before he had his famous administration to his credit, to subside into an easy placeman and vindicate the measures which he had previously denounced. A few lampoons were of course launched at so tempting an object, but he was not made a conspicuous butt. Nor does he seem to have lost, or if he did he soon regained, the ear and confidence of the people. He had at all periods rare powers of recovery. But in this case the fact is not difficult to explain. In the first place it must be borne in mind that what he did was the ordinary thing to do. Again, his personal friends, and even those who had intercourse with him, were impressed by his character and believed in his integrity. Then the refusal of the indirect profits counted for much, it gave an air of austere virtue to a proceeding otherwise questionable. Again, there was no particular object to be gained by attacking him. Who indeed was there to attack him? No one thought it worth their while to subsidise Grub Street for the purpose of throwing dirt on a silent Paymaster, and few dared attack him to his face. He had already inspired the House of Commons with that awe of him which subsisted and increased so long as he remained there. To deliver a philippic against Pitt was no joking matter; it required a man with iron nerves who was reckless of retribution. Lee, as we have seen, had attempted one, but, in spite of Horace Walpole's eulogy, he does not seem to have repeated the experiment. Hampden also attacked him, as we shall see, in terms which would have led to a duel had not the Speaker interposed his authority. Fox and Grenville withstood him doggedly in after years. Barré, when an obscure Irish adventurer, tried an attack not altogether without success, but did not care to renew the attempt, and became, in fact, Pitt's devoted follower. But these instances must be considered as singularly rare when it is remembered how tempting a mark was presented by Pitt's career, how frank and direct was the language of Parliament, and how generous the potations which flushed its debates. Murray, Pitt's contemporary and his equal in sheer ability, cowered before him; cowered with loathing, but cowered.[1] Pitt was already surrounded, and as years went on completely encompassed, with an armour and atmosphere of terror which rendered him almost impregnable to personal collisions throughout his career in the House of Commons. Some who had nothing to lose and everything to gain

[1] He avowed this to Newcastle (Orford, George III. i. 82 note). But it was otherwise patent.

baited him from time to time, but they were always tossed back with damage. Such persistent assailants as he had, and they only appeared in force long afterwards, were mainly anonymous.

Whatever the cause may have been, Pitt, from his accession to office in 1746, remains in obscurity and almost in silence (so far as the records testify, though it is evident that these are extremely imperfect) for eight long years, at the potent period of life which ranges from thirty-eight to forty-six, the age at which Napoleon closed his career, but which was yet two years earlier than the commencement of Pitt's. During this long eclipse of ambition and stormy vigour he gives but few signs of life for the most diligent chronicler to note. But he had no sooner been appointed Paymaster than an incident took place which seemed to point to a sudden dawn of royal favour. The Duke of Cumberland's achievements in Scotland were to be rewarded by a pension of 40,000*l.* a year, and the King expressed a wish that the motion to this effect should be made by Pitt. It is, however, evident that this was not a mark of royal affection, but rather of a royal desire to utilise the new acquisition to the Government, and in a way so little congenial as to make Pitt feel the collar on his neck. The King may have wished to display his captive in chains. But Cumberland, who did not love Pitt, declined this mark of regard, and Pelham fulfilled the honorary duty.

Cumberland had earned this grant, as well as his name of 'the Butcher,' by his victory at Culloden, and the barbarity with which he had followed up his success. Fortunately for him, it never occurred to a grateful country to draw up a debtor and creditor account as between the nation and the Duke. Had it done so, there would have been no grant; for his defeats, both in number and in importance, represented something much more considerable than this easy and solitary triumph, which would have been amply compensated by Swift's 'frankincense and earthern pots to burn it in' at 4*l.* 10*s.*, with 'a bull for sacrifice' at 8*l.* However, mingling vengeance with gratitude, Parliament now plunged itself with zest into the horrors of the trials of some adventurous or bankrupt gentlemen who had followed Charles Edward, so that Pitt, even had he so desired, had no opportunity of breaking silence. No speech of his is recorded, indeed, till 1748.

In the meantime he had been compelled to exchange Old Sarum for the ministerial borough of Seaford, one of the Cinque Ports; for Old Sarum was no longer tenable. The lord of Old Sarum, his brother Thomas, was a liege servant of the Prince of Wales, who was now once more in violent opposition, and who indeed ran two candidates, Lord Middlesex, a member of his household, and Mr. Gage, the sitting member, at Seaford in opposition to the ministerial men, William Pitt and William Hay. This proceeding sufficiently indicates the violence and completeness of the rupture between Pitt and his former master, brought about by acceptance of office. So tense indeed was the contest that Newcastle posted down to Seaford in person, held a levee of the voters whom he wooed with copious solicitation and refreshment, and during the poll sat by the returning officer to overawe the corrupt and limited constituency. He was victorious; Lord Middlesex exchanging seats with Pitt, for after this his defeat he was brought in by Thomas Pitt for Old Sarum. Newcastle's proceedings furnished matter for a petition to the House of Commons. This Pitt treated with contempt and 'turned into a mere jest,'[1] but Potter, son of the Primate, a clever scapegrace, of whom we shall hear again, spoke vigorously in support of the petition. This, however, had little chance against the argument of a compact parliamentary majority, which rejected it by 247 to 96. But it is strange to find Pitt treating purity of election with ridicule: all the more strange when we remember that seven years afterwards he delivered one of his most famous speeches in awful rebuke of the same levity on the same subject. 'Was the dignity of the House of Commons on so sure foundations that they might venture themselves to shake it by jokes on electoral bribery?' It was thus that the House might dwindle into a little assembly serving only 'to register the arbitrary edicts of one too powerful a subject.' It was the arbitrary interference of the same too powerful subject in a parliamentary election that Pitt was now screening with jesting scorn. But Pitt thought little of consistency, and he might well have forgotten for the moment his earlier performance, when seeing and seizing the opportunity for a speech which placed him on a moral elevation above the House of Commons. Nov. 20, 1747.

In 1748 we find him intervening comically enough in an affair, suspiciously like a local job, which affected his friends, the Grenvilles, and which proved the bitter and jealous animosity with which they were regarded.

Hitherto the summer assizes for Buckinghamshire had been held at Buckingham, and the winter at Aylesbury; but suddenly the summer assizes had also been transferred to Aylesbury. The reason seems to have been simple enough; for the gaol being at Aylesbury, prisoners had to be transferred thence and back again when the assizes were at Buckingham. Richard Grenville (afterwards Lord Temple), however, for obvious reasons, took up the cudgels for Buckingham, which was the close neighbour and borough of Stowe, and brought in a Bill to enact that the summer assizes should be held at that town. All Bucks rushed into the conflict, and as is generally the case in a local affair, the debate was extraordinarily diverting. Richard Grenville, Sir William Stanhope of Eythrope, the brother of Chesterfield, and afterwards a brother of the famous or infamous Medmenham fraternity, Potter again, who had now become secretary to the Prince of Wales, who was soon to be member for Aylesbury, probably for his services on this occasion, and also a future monk of Medmenham, George Grenville, the solemn figure of Pitt, Robert Nugent (whose daughter married George Grenville's son), Lee of Hartwell, were all visible and ardent in the thick of the battle. Henry Fox, then a friend of Pitt, was the only outside member who intervened, and then with a sort of puzzled surprise at the fury of the combatants. Sir William Stanhope, who led the attack on Buckingham, made a speech which was specially piquant. He began: 'Sir, if I did not think I could prove that this Bill is the arrantest job that ever was brought to Parliament, I should not give the House the trouble of hearing me.' He attributed the Bill to the fact that the County of Bucks had not elected two Grenvilles as their members. 'Here let me condole with that unhappy, rather that blinded, county who neglected to choose two gentlemen of such power and interest that I am persuaded they will have more votes in this House to-day than they would have had at the General Election in the whole county in question if they had done it the honour to offer themselves for representatives.' After this bitter exordium he proceeded: 'It is the power and interest of these gentlemen that I am afraid of, not of their arguments;' with good reason, for though to posterity the claim of Aylesbury with its gaol will seem conclusive, the Bill was triumphantly carried. But Stanhope proceeded with an invective against Cobham's young patriots, so violent as to be checked by the Speaker. It is noteworthy as showing the jealousy and hostility with which their rise and power were regarded in the House, and so merits quotation:—

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[1] Parl. Hist. xiv. 103.

> And to shew you, Sir, how sensible they are of the frivolousness of the latter, I could recapitulate such instances of intriguing for votes, as no man would believe who does not know those gentlemen. Conscious of the badness of their cause, they have employed every bad art to support it, and have retained so much of their former patriotism, as consisted in blackening their adversaries and acquiring auxiliaries. They have propagated such tales, that men have overlooked the improbabilities, while they wondered at the foolishness of them; and they have solicited the attendance of their friends, and of their friends' friends, with as much importunity as if their power itself was tottering, not the wanton exercise of it opposed: the only aid they have failed to call in was reason, the natural but baffled enemy of their family: a family, Sir, possessed of every honour they formerly decried, fallen from every honour they formerly acquired: a family, Sir, who coloured over ambition with patriotism, disguised emptiness by noise, and disgraced every virtue by wearing them only for mercenary purposes: a family, Sir, who from being the most clamorous incendiaries against power and places, are possessed of more employments than

the most comprehensive place-bill that ever was brought into parliament would include; and who, to every indignity offered to their royal master, have added that greatest of all, intrusion of themselves into his presence and councils; and who shew him what he has still farther to expect, by their scandalous ingratitude to his son; a family, Sir, raised from obscurity by the petulance of the times, drawn up higher by the insolence of their bribing kinsman, and supported by the timidity of two ministers, who, to secure their own persons from abuse have sacrificed their own party to this all-grasping family, the elder ones of which riot in the spoils of their treachery and places, and the younger . . . .

At this point he was, not prematurely, called to order. Stanhope brought up Pitt, portentous but unconvincing, with perhaps a unique expression, for he addressed the Speaker as 'dear Sir.' 'They (the Grenvilles) desire the assizes may be sometimes held at Buckingham; the point he (Stanhope) espouses is that they should be always held at Aylesbury. Which, dear Sir, looks most like a monopoly?' Then he proceeds to defend the Grenvilles.

After so happy a beginning, he falls into a torrent of violent abuse on a whole family, founded on no reason in the world, but because that family is distinguished by the just rewards of their services to their king and country; and, in the heat of his resentment, he throws out things that are as unpardonably seditious as they are palpably absurd. He takes it for granted that men force themselves into a presence and into councils to which they have the honour to be called, and into which our Constitution renders it impossible for any to intrude. In the same breath he makes entering into a father's service an act of ingratitude to a son; and, without so much as pretending to assign either facts or reasons, he bestows the most low and infamous epithets upon characters that all other men mention with esteem. In a word, he forgot himself to such a degree that he pointed out men of birth and fortune, and in high stations, as if they were the most abandoned and profligate creatures in the universe, without parts, without morals, without shame, and who, if his description had in it the least tittle of truth, instead of being Members of Parliament, or admitted to the Privy Council, were fit only to be members of a society once famous by the name of the Hell-fire Club.[1]

It is not worth while to follow this local squabble further, except to notice the singular atmosphere of jobbery with which it was surrounded. By a job, it was alleged, Lord Chief Justice Baldwin, having purchased the manor of Aylesbury in the reign of Henry VIII., had transferred the assizes from Buckingham to Aylesbury. By another job a judge who was a native of Buckingham had managed that the summer assizes should be always held at Buckingham while he lived. 'The arrantest job,' cried Stanhope. 'One of the worst sort of jobs,' echoed Potter, who divided jobs into two species, one laudable and the other infamous, declaring this to be one of the latter kind. Lee also called it a private job of the most infamous kind. Articulate Buckinghamshire was indeed unanimous against the Bill. But the Grenvilles were now powerful with all the insolence of power, and the Government smiled silently on their enterprise; though Nugent said they could only have done so from weariness of political serenity, and the wish to invite catastrophe. So the Bill was carried, and the job, whatever its exact denomination may have been, lasted for nearly a century.[2] But the debate, as will be seen, is significant because it shows the resentment which had long been growing, but which was now openly displayed against Cobham's aggressive and ambitious group.

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[1] See the debate in Parl. Hist. xiv. 204.

[2] Gibbs' History of Aylesbury, 502.

We do not again hear Pitt's voice till 1749, when he vindicated the proposal of the Government to pay to Glasgow ten thousand pounds to reimburse the city in some degree for what the occupation of the Jacobites had cost it. This of course was an official speech and of no permanent interest.[1] He had to prove that the case of Glasgow stood by itself, and that there was no analogy between this and those of other towns which made the same claim. Two of his points are incidentally worthy of remark. The first is that it was the whole tenor of Glasgow's conduct since the Reformation which had drawn upon it the resentment of the Jacobites; the second, that if this payment were not made, and made promptly, Glasgow must be ruined. He told, too, a story which merits preservation. When there were rumours in 1688 of the coming of William III. with 30,000 men, an adherent of James II. made light of the matter; when it was said that the prince was coming with 20,000 he began to be alarmed; but when he heard that the expeditionary force numbered only 14,000 he cried, 'We are undone: an army of 30,000 men could not conquer England. But no man would come here with only 14,000 unless he were sure of finding a great many traitors among ourselves.'[2]

In 1750 there is a faint echo of Pitt's voice in a discussion on the annual Mutiny Bill, at least the only echo in the recorded debates, for we learn from two letters of

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[1] Torrens says (History of Cabinets, ii. 119) that this speech was revised by Pitt, but gives no authority. Almon (i. 172) specifically declares that it was written by Gordon.

[2] Parl. Hist. xiv. 502.

Pitt's to George Grenville that there had been other long and troublesome discussions in which he had had officially to bear much of the burden.[1] Colonel Townshend brought forward the case of non-commissioned officers who had been broke or reduced to the ranks without any cause assigned. Some of these, he said, were waiting at the bar as he spoke. He proposed a clause for preventing this abuse, and forbidding these punishments except under sentence of a court-martial. Pitt took the line, truly enough, that if soldiers were on every occasion to bring their complaints against their officers to the House for redress there would be an end to all discipline; and proceeded in the tone of a Paymaster-General to declare that the business of the House was to consider the requisite number of the forces and to grant money for their payment, but that the conduct of the army or complaints against one another were solely within the province of the King or those commissioned by His Majesty.[2] This need not detain us. About the same time, Lord Egmont, who now represented the Prince of Wales in the House of Commons, an able man not without incredible absurdities, brought forward a mischievous motion with regard to Dunkirk. The question which he raised was whether the French had demolished the fortifications erected during the late war, as by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle they were bound to do; but he diverged into a general attack upon the provisions of that Treaty. Pelham answered him in a speech of remarkable candour. Lord Strange followed and brought up Pitt. He defended the peace, which indeed was not difficult, in a

[1] Grenville Papers, i. 93–5.

[2] Parl. Hist. xiv. 664.

speech eminently discreet, ministerial, and conciliatory. No one could discover in it any germ of the policy he was destined afterwards to pursue with such triumphant success. But he cast an interesting light on the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. 'If there be any secret in the late affairs of Europe,' he said, 'it is in the question how it was possible for our ministers to obtain so good a peace as they did. For I must confess that when the French laid siege to Maestricht in the beginning of 1748, I had such a gloomy prospect of affairs that I thought it next to impossible to preserve our friends the Dutch from the imminent ruin they were then threatened with, or to maintain the present Emperor upon the imperial throne.'[1] Though he had thus already spoken, he wound up the debate for the Ministry, and did so with equal discretion.

This was in February 1750. He seems to have spoken no more that session, but in August Pelham wrote to his brother: 'I think him the most able and useful man we have among us, truly honourable and strictly honest. He is as firm a friend to us as we can wish for, and a more useful one does not exist.'[2] Such an eulogy, offered in confidence by a Prime Minister, a reticent, unemotional man, seems to us a great mark and epoch in Pitt's career. Not 'the most brilliant,' not 'the most eloquent,' not 'the most intrepid,' as we should have expected, but 'the most useful, able, and strictly honest.'

Aug. 3–14, 1750.

Pitt had earned this praise by exertions which were not visible to the outer world. It often happens that there is a member of Government whose merits do not appeal to the public, who is no orator, who passes no measures, whose conversation does not attract, and whose position in an administration is a puzzle to the outer world. And yet perhaps his colleagues regard him as invaluable. He is probably the peacemaker, the man who walks about dropping oil into the machinery, and preventing injurious friction. This had recently been Pitt's position. He had been diligently and unobtrusively trying to keep the Government together. This was not so easy as it would seem; for though the brothers Pelham had arranged it to their will when they ejected Carteret, the morbid and intolerable jealousies of Newcastle prevented any ease. Did other subjects of intrigue and irritation fail he would quarrel with his brother, for when all else was serene it would secretly chafe him that his junior should be in the first place and he only in the second. Henry himself, it may be noted, seems to have been both blameless and placable on these occasions, but naturally bored. The elder brother would begin whimpering and whining to Hardwicke, his prop and confidant. Hardwicke would soothe him as a sick baby is soothed, eventually his tears would be dried, and he would begin burrowing and intriguing in some other direction.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xiv. 692–6.

[2] Coxe's Pelham Adm. ii. 370.

On this occasion the trouble arose over Bedford. Bedford had become Joint Secretary of State with Newcastle on the resignation of Chesterfield. Sandwich, a clever scapegrace, and Bedford's henchman, had been Newcastle's candidate for the office, while Henry Fox had been strongly supported by Pitt and others. Before offering it to Sandwich, it was thought well to make an honorary tender of the post to Bedford, in the belief that he would refuse it. Bedford, as sometimes happens on such occasions, had promptly accepted it; for six months as he said, but, as also happens, for as long as he could keep it, which was more than three years. The appointment was thus distasteful in its origin to Newcastle and became more irksome with experience. Bedford as a minister was indolent, and as a man was obstinate and unamiable to a singular degree. But it was not these drawbacks which attracted the malevolent attention of Newcastle. Bedford, no doubt, was difficult to work with, and Newcastle soon wished to be rid of him. But it was when Bedford became well with the Court, with the King and with Princess Amelia, for whom Newcastle had once affected to feel something more tender than friendship, with the Duke of Cumberland and Lady Yarmouth, that Newcastle's hatred passed the bounds of moderation and almost of sanity. Pelham, who knew the parliamentary power of Bedford and who was anxious not to alienate it, was reluctant to take up his brother's dispute; so Newcastle promptly quarrelled with him. Pitt intervened. Had he been blindly ambitious, he would have welcomed a schism which might have produced a much greater position for himself. But he saw that a quarrel between the brethren would break up the Ministry; and that such a destruction would involve grave consequences, difficult to calculate, and possibly the resuscitation of Carteret in the first place. Moreover, though on the whole he sided with Newcastle, as Fox sided with Pelham, he could not but be aware of the priceless merits of Pelham as a party manager, as one who allayed animosities, and as one who kept the peace. Pelham, in writing to Newcastle, affects to diminish the value of Pitt's intervention, as he wishes to attribute the renewal of harmony to 'natural affection.' But an impartial judgment comes to a different conclusion Natural affection had not prevented discord, and was insufficient to produce reconciliation. It is at all times an indifferent political cement. But the exertions of an independent colleague such as Pitt could not be overestimated. There exists a long and earnest letter of July 13, 1750, from Pitt to Newcastle, too long and too tedious to quote, but which is both tactful and energetic, though in his worst style of winding verbosity. 'I don't hazard much,' he wrote, 'in venturing to prophesy that two brothers who love one another, and two ministers essentially necessary to each other, will never suffer themselves to be divided further than the nearest friends by difference of opinion or even little ruffles of temper may occasionally be. Give me leave,' he continues, 'to suggest a doubt. May not frequent reproaches upon one subject gall and irritate a mind not conscious, intentionally at least, of giving cause?' and so forth.[1] He concludes all this with warm eulogies on Newcastle's conduct of foreign affairs, and soothes and flatters the fretful duke with something like sympathetic regard. He or 'natural affection' is successful, for, a week afterwards, he writes a brief note on another subject, which ends thus: 'I am glad to note that the understanding between you and Mr. Pelham, for which I had fears, is re-established.'[2] It is pleasant thus to catch a glimpse of Pitt as a loyal colleague, strenuously patching up differences; not less pleasant to see him pushing the claims of

[1] Add. MSS. 32721.

[2] July 20, 1750. Add. MSS. 32721.

his rival, Fox, to be Secretary of State. This is a new human, and attractive aspect.

The termination of the Bedford transaction is worth noticing for more reasons than one. The King, though he was at least indifferent to Bedford, declined to remove him at the instance of Newcastle, and was probably pleased to have the opportunity of thwarting the tiresome minister who had been the inseparable bane and necessity of his life. Pelham would not intervene directly for other reasons. A characteristic and tortuous method was therefore adopted. The King cared nothing for Sandwich, who was necessary to Bedford. So the brothers suggested the removal of Sandwich, to which the King promptly acceded, and Bedford, as they had foreseen, instantly resigned.

Two points are notable with regard to the vacancy thus caused. The Prime Minister announced that the nomination of Bedford's successor must be left to the sole nomination of the King, with which he would not interfere in any way, but insisted that he must be a peer.[1] The main reason for this strange limitation seems to have been that there were fierce but dormant rivalries in the House of Commons, and that an appointment of one of the aspirants would call uncontrollable passions into activity. Both Secretaries of State must therefore be peers, a principle which seems strange to a later generation. The King, therefore, nominated Lord Holdernesse, of whom the Prime Minister merely observes, 'I cannot possibly see him in the light of Secretary of State.'[2] Holdernesse however is appointed, and reappears more than once in this accidental character.

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[1] Coxe's Pelham Adm. ii. 131, 370.

[2] Ib. ii. 396.

But Pelham, though he tried to take this affair easily, was near the end of his patience. He was worn out by the perpetual exigencies and caprice of his brother and colleague, for Newcastle was in truth his partner in the Premiership, as well as by the explosive rivalries of Pitt and Fox, which any spark might ignite. Chained to an intolerable nincompoop, with two such subordinates ready to fly at each other's throats or his, and conscious of failing health, he began to long for liberty and repose. At the end of March 1751 died the second Earl of Orford, and thus vacated the rich sinecure office of Auditor of the Exchequer, worth at least eight thousand a year. Pelham, it is said, intimated his wish to retire from active business with this noble provision, but the King would not let him go.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON the meeting of Parliament in January 1751, Lord Egmont raised on the Address the question of the peace with Spain. Pitt in reply delivered a speech of singular interest, for he disarms criticism by frankly avowing the errors of his 'young and sanguine' days, to employ his own epithets. After pointing out that the Spaniards could not be expected to give up the assertion of their right of search any more than we would renounce our claim to the right of free navigation in the American seas, he proceeded: 'I must therefore conclude, Sir, that "no search" is a stipulation which it is ridiculous to insist on, because it is impossible to be obtained. And after having said this I expect to be told that upon a former occasion I concurred heartily in a motion for an address not to admit of any treaty of peace with Spain unless such a stipulation as this should be first obtained as a preliminary thereto. I confess I did, Sir, because I then thought it right, but I was then very young and sanguine. I am now ten years older, and have had time to consider things more coolly. From that consideration I am convinced that we may as well ask for a free and open trade with all the Spanish settlements in America, as ask that none of our ships shall be visited or stopt, though sailing within a bowshot of their shore; and within that distance our ships must often sail in order to have the benefit of what they call the land breeze.' 'I am also convinced that all addresses from this House during the course of a war, for prescribing terms of peace, are in themselves ridiculous; because the turns or chances of war are generally so sudden and often so little expected that it is impossible to foresee or foretell what terms of peace it may be proper to insist on. And as the Crown has the sole power of making peace or war, every such address must certainly be an encroachment upon the King's prerogative, which has always hitherto proved to be unlucky. For these reasons I believe I should never hereafter concur in any such address, unless made so conditional as to leave the Crown at full liberty to agree to such terms of peace as may at the time be thought most proper, which this of "no search" can never be, unless Spain should be brought so low as to give us a *carte blanche;* and such a low ebb it is not our interest to bring that nation to, nor would the other Powers of Europe suffer it, should we attempt it.'[1]

This is a new milestone. 'Those who endeavour to quote from my former speeches, the outpourings of my hot and fractious youth, are hereby warned off. I have sown my wild oats; henceforward I am to be regarded as a prudent and sagacious statesman.' This was the real purport of this speech, divested of the necessary circumlocutions. A statesman who has been an active politician in his youth usually has to utter some such warning and repentant note in his maturity.

In 1751 we find Pitt delivering another speech which marks a further distance from his unregenerate days. At this time, for reasons which we can now scarcely discern, but which originated with George II., who considered that the peace and safety of his electorate depended on a secure succession to the Empire being vested in the House of Austria, our foreign policy was concentrated on securing the election of Maria Theresa's son, a boy of ten years old, as King of the Romans, and so heir to the Empire. This strange line of action was absurd enough to be congenial to Newcastle, who soon adopted it, called it his darling child, and grudged its paternity to the King.[1] Pelham had reluctantly to follow, only deprecating expenditure as far as possible. For this we slaved and negotiated and subsidised, in the faith that should the Emperor die without a King of the Romans being ready to succeed him, a war must infallibly ensue. This hypothesis was at least doubtful; but, in any case, we expended our energies in vain. Prussia, and France as guarantor of the Treaty of Westphalia, declared the election of a minor to be contrary to the fundamental laws of the Empire, and prevailed. There is the less reason to deplore our failure, as it is not known what we should have gained by success. Austria, which was alone to profit, threw the coldest water on the project. The obvious flaw of the policy appears to have been that the receipt of subsidies so entirely conflicted with the electoral oath as to form an insuperable bar of honour preventing any elector who received them from voting for our candidate. We were in fact to bribe those who could not vote if they accepted our bribe, for an object flagrantly illegal, on behalf of a Power which scouted our assistance. We offered to bribe the Electors of Mainz, Cologne, and Saxony. To the Elector of Bavaria we agreed by treaty to pay 40,000*l.* a year, the sum to be made up by Holland and ourselves. It was this last treaty which Pitt found himself called upon to defend, and his speech was a broad defence of the whole system and principle of subsidies. 'Surely,' he cried, 'it is more Feb. 22, 1751. prudent in us to grant subsidies to foreign princes for keeping up a number of troops for the service of the common cause of Europe, than by keeping up such numerous armies of our own here at home, as might be of the most dangerous consequence to our constitution.'[1] This must have seemed strange doctrine to those who remembered his former harangues. But in this speech he was to exceed himself in superfluous candour. He had said that there was a good prospect of a firm and lasting peace, and then strangely wandered off to the consequent prospect of economy at home, 'perhaps by a different method of collecting the revenue. I am not afraid to mention the word Excise.[2] I was not in the House when the famous Excise scheme was brought upon the carpet. If I had I should probably have been induced by the general but groundless clamour to have joined with those who opposed it. But I have seen so much of the deceit of popular clamours, and the artful surmises upon which they are founded, and I am so fully convinced of the benefits we should reap by preventing all sorts of unfair trade, that if ever any such scheme be again offered whilst I have a seat in this assembly, I believe I shall be as heartily for it as I am for the motion now under our consideration.'[3]

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[1] Parl. Hist. xiv. 801.

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[1] Coxe's Pelham Adm. ii. 225, 359.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xiv. 967.

[2] Stone to Newcastle, Feb. 22, 1750/1. Add. MSS. 32724.

[3] Parl. Hist. xiv. 970.

It is scarcely possible to conceive a more deliberate and scornful repudiation of responsibility for any previous opinions that he may have maintained than is expressed in this passage. He goes out of his way to tender an unnecessary support to the detested Excise scheme, which at the same time he declares that he should certainly have opposed had he been in the House when it was introduced. The middle-aged Pitt seemed never to tire of trampling savagely on the young Pitt, even wantonly, as on this occasion. There is, indeed, more justice than is usual in Horace Walpole's taunts when he says of Pitt, 'Where he chiefly shone was in exposing his own conduct; having waded through the most notorious apostasy in politics, he treated it with an impudent confidence that made all reflections upon him poor and spiritless when worded by any other men.' This is one way of putting it. A preferable and, in our judgment, a truer way is that Pitt deliberately chose this method of public atonement for past recklessness, and as an avowal that he had learned and ripened by experience. He recanted at large, so as to obliterate every vestige of his heedless and censorious youth. It is better for the country and for themselves that statesmen should thus do penance than that they should continue to offer sacrifices of what they see to be right to the somewhat egotistical pagod of their personal consistency. Honourable consistency is necessary to retain the confidence of the country; but there is also a dishonourable consistency in concealing and suppressing conscientious changes of judgment.

Though, as we have seen, his defence of the principle of subsidies seemed unbounded, it was more limited in practice, and Pitt fixed his limit at the Bavarian contribution. In 1752 Pelham had to move a subsidy to the Elector of Saxony, King of Poland. This had been negotiated by Newcastle, but was so strongly disapproved by Pelham that he even threatened to second the opposition to it. However, he was persuaded by the argument most urgent and sometimes most fatal to prime ministers, that the apparent unity of the Government must at any cost be maintained, to withdraw his opposition and move the vote. Old Horatio Walpole, though he voted with Pelham, spoke warmly against him, and Pitt supported Walpole's argument, though privately and not in speech. He felt, it may be presumed, that it was not for him to be more of a Pelhamite than Pelham himself.

With Pelham, however, he had felt constrained to be at open variance in the previous year, about the time of the Bavarian subsidy. The Minister had moved a reduction of our seamen from 10,000 to 8000. Pitt declared a preference for 10,000; and Potter, whom we have seen in the Buckingham and Aylesbury affair, a clever, worthless fellow, who had now become an ally of Pitt, opposed the reduction. Pelham seemed to acquiesce, but Lord Hartington, an enthusiastic Pelhamite, who was hereafter to be for a while Prime Minister under Pitt, forced a division, in order to show Pitt that the Whigs would not support him against Pelham. Pitt's immediate following on this occasion seems to have consisted only of Lyttelton, the three Grenvilles, Conway, and eight others. There was, it is to be observed, nothing factious in this; the opinion of Pitt was natural, and not distasteful to Pelham. Moreover, on the report Pitt made a conciliatory speech, marking in the strongest manner his regret at differing with Pelham, declaring that it was his fear of Jacobitism alone which made him prefer the larger number, and expressing his concern at seeing our body of trained seamen, whom he called our standing army, reduced. He and his little following, or rather cousinhood, vied with each other in loyal eulogies of the Prime Minister.

This called up Hampden, an intrepid buffoon, but the great-grandson of the patriot, and 'twenty-fourth hereditary lord of Great Hampden,' who attacked Pitt and his group with rancour. Here, again, we seem to discern traces of Buckinghamshire politics and jealousies. Temple and his belongings had, as we have seen, many enemies in their own county, and Hampden was one of them. Perhaps the Aylesbury affair still rankled. Pitt was visibly angered. Though Pelham warmly defended him, he was not appeased, and the affair would have ended in a duel had not the Speaker's authority intervened. In the succeeding year, it may be noted, the number of 10,000 was restored.

Though these hostilities were averted, the debate produced further friction between the brethren who controlled the Ministry. Newcastle was profusely grateful to Pitt for the line he had taken. He wrote to one of his vassals (January 30, 1750–1): 'As you can be no stranger (if you have attended the late debate) to the able and affectionate manner in which Mr. Pitt has taken upon himself to defend me, and the measures which have been solely carried on by me, when both have been openly attacked with violence, and when no other person opened his lips, in defence of either, but Mr. Pitt, I think myself bound in honour and gratitude to show my sense of it in the best way I am able. I must therefore desire that neither you nor any of my friends would give into any clamour or row that may be made against him from any of the party on account of his differing as to the number of seamen. For after the kind part he has acted to me, and (as far as I am allowed to be part of it) the meritorious one to the administration, I cannot think any man my friend who shall join in any such clamour, and who does not do all in his power to discourage it. I desire you would read this letter to' (here follow the names of seven forgotten men whom we may presume to have been his closest followers).[1] Pitt's attitude had alarmed Pelham, and this letter from the Duke, so formidable from parliamentary influence, made him sensible of imminent danger. He saw that he must either be reconciled to his brother or face that alarming coalition of Pitt and Newcastle which was afterwards effected with so much success. Once more there was a crisis, and Pelham's son-in-law Lincoln was called in as mediator. A treaty of peace of three articles was solemnly drawn up between the brothers, and apparent harmony restored. The King, however, broke out anew with emphatic anger against Pitt and the Grenvilles.

This was probably due to the rumour that Pitt and his connections were negotiating with the Prince of Wales. This is not improbable. We know indeed that Lyttelton was arranging through his brother-in-law Dr. Ayscough for a coalition between the forces of Stowe and those of Leicester House. The King was old, and ambitious politicians would not wish to be ill with his heir, if that could be avoided. But all such foresight was wasted, for Frederick was never to reign, and within two months of the vote on the seamen he was dead. Up to the last he was intriguing and securing adherents. On February 28 he was engaging Oswald, an able debater in the House of Commons, to his cause; on March 20 he died. Next morning his party was convoked by Egmont to consider the future. Many came, probably from curiosity, but dispersed without any conclusion. 'My Lord Drax,' writes Henry Fox in pleasant allusion to the promises of the Prince, 'my Lord Colebrook, Earl Dodington, and prime minister Egmont are distracted; but nobody more so than Lord Cobham, who *cum suis* has been making great court and with some effect all this winter. Do not name this from me. I fear they will not be dealt with as I would deal with them.'[1] In truth the purpose and bond of the party, the sole reason for its existence, had disappeared. Henceforth the courtiers who found no favour with the King kept their eyes on the Princess of Wales and her eldest son, a shy, sensitive boy, who was afterwards to be George III. Soon they began to perceive in this obscure court a handsome, supercilious Scotsman, who enjoyed the favour of the Princess and the veneration of her son, who was now a lord of the Prince's bedchamber, but was hereafter to head one ministry and become the bugbear of many others, John Earl of Bute.

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[1] Coxe's Pelham Adm. ii. 144.

The Heir Apparent was only thirteen, and a Regency Bill was required. This is only pertinent to our narrative in that it produced a fierce parliamentary duel between Pitt and Fox, the point at issue between them being the Duke of Cumberland, whom the King wished, but the Ministry

[1] Coxe's Pelham Adm. ii. 165.

did not dare, to nominate Regent. Indeed, one of the principal expressions of popular grief for the loss of the Prince of Wales had taken the form of regret that the death had not been that of the Duke. 'Oh! that it was but his brother! Oh! that it was but the Butcher!' Unfortunately, the speeches of neither Pitt nor Fox in this session have come down to us. All that we know is that Pelham declared that Pitt's was the finest speech that ever he heard. Pitt had strongly maintained that the Regency must be closely restricted, the vital contention of his son thirty-seven years later, and hinted that Cumberland, if unrestrained in his capacity as head of the Council of Regency, might be tempted to usurp the Crown. Hence the wrath of Fox, the close friend of the royal Duke; hence, too, the antipathy of Cumberland to Pitt, which was to cause complications thereafter.

Pitt and his family connections, whose allegiance to the Ministry had been under suspicion, and who had been in negotiation with the Prince's party, were rallied into apparent fidelity to the Ministry by the Prince's death, without, however, severing their renewed connection with Leicester House. But it was acquiescence rather than loyalty. Between the two ministerial orators in the House of Commons, Fox and Pitt, there had been cordial friendship. But it is evident that this had ceased. Fox, as we have seen, would have dealt with Pitt and the Grenvilles as traitors, and one would infer that it was the negotiation with the Prince of Wales which had angered him. The fact that Fox had sided with Pelham, and Pitt with Newcastle, had probably tended to division. Pitt, indeed, afterwards accused Pelham, poor soul, with having fostered their variance. Then there had been the affair of the Regency. There had, too, just previously to the Prince's death, been a sharp altercation between them in a small debate raised by the petition for compensation of an ill-used gentleman in Minorca. This Pelham had refused; while Pitt upheld the claim with his wonted energy, but with unusual absurdity. He would support the petition of a man so oppressed and of so ancient a family to the last drop of his blood. Fox ridiculed this extravagance, and Pitt was nettled. This is only notable as a symptom of prevailing temper.

But the facts of their personalities speak for themselves. They were rivals in Parliament, neither of them very scrupulous, both fierce in debate. What need of further explanation? Fox, moreover, viewed Pitt's overtures to Leicester House with distrust, not merely from the point of view of a minister, but from that of the Duke of Cumberland, to whom he was devoted, and who detested the Prince of Wales and his crew. So that on the Regency Bill it was the wrath between the two factions which broke into open war. It was in the main the devotion of Fox to Cumberland which originally divided and then estranged him from Pitt. They were afterwards to reunite for a time by the mutual attraction of brains opposed to imbecility.

This is perhaps the best opportunity to consider the character of this Henry Fox, who was now Pitt's rival. Strangely enough there is no real biography of this remarkable man, a vigorous and interesting figure, who has been to some extent obscured by his more popular and famous son.

It would almost be enough to say that Fox was everything that Pitt was not. He had not that wayward but divine fire which we call genius, and which inspired Pitt; but he had the saving quality of common sense which was wanting to his rival. He laid no claim to the oratory of Pitt; he was, we are told hesitating and inelegant, not indeed a good speaker; but he was plain and forcible, with a good business-like wear and tear style, which is in Parliament not less valuable than oratory; on occasions indeed he spoke with a vehemence and closeness of reasoning which almost anticipated the supreme faculty of his son. More than all, he thoroughly understood the House of Commons. He had the cordial manner, the veneer at least of good fellowship, the frankness savouring of cynicism, which make for an eminently serviceable sort of parliamentary popularity. In one respect, as a letter writer, he was greatly Pitt's superior. While Pitt was prancing fantastic minuets before his correspondents, Fox, without wasting a word, went straight to the point; and his letters are pregnant, graphic, and forcible. There are perhaps none better in the English language than those in which he describes the debates of December 1755. He was, what Pitt was not, a genial companion, fond of the bottle and the chase; he had, indeed, been a gambler and a debauchee. He was, what Pitt was not, a man of the world, and was closely allied with the choicest blood of the aristocracy by a marriage with a daughter of the Duke of Richmond. Pitt was a county gentleman, who had indeed married Temple's sister, but had thus entered a more limited and less exalted connection. They both had courage, but Fox minded the rebuffs of debate much less than Pitt. He was passionate, but with a passion less sublime than Pitt's. Pitt could sometimes feign passion; Fox could sometimes repress it. In later life, when it had been long smouldering, it was ungovernable. But at this time it only displayed itself in a not ungenerous resentment. In the race for success it would perhaps have been safer to back Fox than Pitt.

But Fox had one incurable flaw which was wholly wanting in Pitt: his aims were base and material. He was content for long years to be Paymaster, amassing a huge fortune from all the emoluments, legitimate and semi-legitimate, of that lucrative office, when a noble ambition would not have stooped to so gross an obscurity. And besides money he had another weakness. He longed to be a lord. In the moment of his rival's triumph and his own fall we find him writing to Lady Yarmouth soliciting a peerage in almost abject terms.[1] That was refused, and it was only after long years of unabashed solicitation that he obtained his object. At last a peerage was accorded to his wife, as if to mark the reluctance felt to giving it to himself. Then his chance came. Bute had to find a bold and unscrupulous agent to carry the Peace through the House, and Fox was his man. Not merely had Fox to earn his peerage but to wreak some vengeances.[2] He accepted the task readily, and had as his first reward the joy of removing Newcastle from the lieutenancy of three counties. And then, as if animated by a hatred of the whole human race, he expelled from their posts all, from the highest to the humblest, whom he suspected of opposition. It was a reign of terror, and by

[1] Holland House MSS.

[2] Colebrooke's Memoirs, i. 63.

terror he accomplished the work he had been hired to do. Then he claimed his reward. He had earned and he received his peerage. But he had also earned and received a detestation, rarely accorded in England to a statesman, which lasted for the rest of his life, and which finds vent in the bitter lampoon which Gray, the gentlest of scholars, was moved to write.

Later again, in his opulent seclusion, Fox was fired with a new ambition to become an earl.[1] He feared no extremity, no humiliation, to obtain his cherished object. But he failed. He was no longer worth buying; he could not, indeed, be employed. So in bitterness of spirit he passed away, cheered only by his delightful devotion to his wife and children, and by the goodwill of a few staunch friends.

There is something profoundly melancholy in Fox's degeneracy. Its commencement is clearly marked. In 1756 he was an easy companion, a good friend, kindly and beloved; he was honoured and admired; he was the second man in the House of Commons, willing and able to dare all. But when he was discarded, and had subsided into the Paymastership, he seems to have suffered a gradual deterioration. His objects became sordid; he lost the finer elements of his character; his ambition sank into something composed of vindictiveness and greed; his generous wine became corked and bitter. But at the time we are writing of, he was still amiable, still courageous, still warm with some instinct of honour, patriotism, and high emulation, still an able and masculine figure. It is perhaps unfair to anticipate a decline which is outside our limits. But the change is so remarkable, throwing, as it were, a back light on some of the puzzling aspects of Fox's earlier career, that it cannot well be unnoticed.

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[1] Earl of Rochester. Ib. 73.

More ominous of Pitt's attitude to the Ministry than any small incidents of debate was Pitt's silence. For three successive sessions of Parliament, in 1752, 1753, and in that which closed in April 1754, he practically held his peace. Nothing could be more sinister, nothing could mark more emphatically his discontent. Sickness, it appears, accounted in part for this abstinence from the arena. 'After a year of sullen illness,' as Horace Walpole describes it, he intervened in 1753; and this was followed by another twelve months of silence and of illness not less sullen. The intervention of 1753 was not very happy. By an Act passed in June 1753, foreign Jews had been rendered capable of naturalisation. The Bill had passed into law without serious opposition, but soon aroused great popular clamour. Grub Street, as usual, was called into requisition.

'But Lord! how surprised when they heard of the news
That we were to be servants to circumcised Jews,
To be negroes and slaves instead of True Blues,
Which nobody can deny.'

Newcastle was charged with having been bribed.

'That money you know is a principal thing,
It will pay a Duke's mortgage or interest bring.'[1]

On the meeting of Parliament in November of the same year Newcastle at once moved to repeal it. It had only been, he said in his silly jargon, a 'point of political

[1] Wilkins, Political Ballads, ii. 312.

policy,' and as it had aroused agitation in the public it had better be repealed. Foote recalled this slipshod phrase in his comical portrait of the Duke. 'The honour,' says Matthew Mug, 'I this day solicit will be to me the most honourable honour that can be conferred.' Pitt supported the repeal in a speech on which his admirers would not Nov. 27, 1753. desire to dwell. He was still in favour of the Act, but should vote for its repeal, because the people wished it, having been misled by the 'old High Church persecuting spirit' into believing that religion was concerned in the matter, which was not the fact, therefore an explanatory preamble was necessary. 'In the present case we ought to treat the people as a prudent father would treat his child; if a peevish, perverse boy should insist on something that was not quite right but of such a nature as, when granted, could not be attended with any very bad consequence, an indulgent father would comply with the humour of his child, but at the same time he would let him know that he did so merely out of complaisance, and not because he approved of what the child insisted on.'[1] Whether this would or would not be the wisest course of parental discipline it is not necessary to discuss, but it was in the spirit of the practice that prevailed in the Fox family rather than in that of the Pitts. The repeal was passed with the preamble of admonition.

This reluctant, ironical support was all that Pitt gave his colleagues. It cannot indeed be doubted that throughout these three lean years of silence he was hostile to the Ministry. Promises had probably been made on his first accession to office which he thought had been ill-kept. He had been told, no doubt, that every effort would be made to make him more acceptable to the King, and he might well doubt if there had been much strenuous effort in that direction. And indeed a topic so sure to excite the royal spleen was not likely to be raised except under the pressure of absolute necessity. At any rate there had been no result. 'The Pitts and Lytteltons are grown very mutinous on the Newcastle's not choosing Pitt for his colleague,' writes Horace Walpole six weeks after the Prince's death. For Bedford was known to be doomed by Newcastle, and his Secretaryship of State would soon be vacant. There were many aspirants for the succession, but no whisper of Pitt. Cobham, who had been his main supporter, was dead;[1] no one could speak with so much authority on his behalf; and even had Cobham survived he would probably have been silent.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xv. 154.

Soon after the letter from Walpole which we have quoted (June 1751) Bedford had resigned. He had been succeeded by Holdernesse. At the same time Granville, the object of Pitt's inveterate philippics, was admitted to the Cabinet as President of the Council. These events may well have inflamed Pitt's resentment, which had, we cannot doubt, been long smouldering. The great obstacle to his advancement was the King, who, as he knew, had always detested him. It was with the greatest difficulty that the Pelhams could persuade the Sovereign not altogether to ignore him at the Levees. Could he indeed trust the brothers? He appreciated no doubt Pelham's qualities at the Treasury, in council, and in the House of Commons. It seems impossible to believe that Pitt ever can have trusted

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[1] September, 1749.

Newcastle; though he addresses the Duke in his letters with an affected flummery of devotion. Almon, who is not a trustworthy authority, but who is supported in this instance by a probability which we may well deem irresistible, says that in at least one interview in the year 1752 he treated Newcastle with such scorn that Newcastle had he dared would have dismissed him from office.[1] Pitt had openly scoffed at the King of the Romans policy, Newcastle's cherished plan, and told the Duke that he was engaging in subsidies without knowing the amount, and in alliances without knowing the terms. Why, indeed, should Pitt trust Newcastle, whom no one had ever trusted, and whom Pitt must have measured and known to the very marrow of his bones?

We may take it as certain then that Pitt viewed the Duke with contemptuous penetration, and tolerated his grimaces and professions only till such time as he could put them to the test. Meanwhile there was a free trade in blandishments between them. Newcastle would send venison from Holland, and carp and fruit, and Pitt would abound in gratitude.[2] He still thought well to profess friendship, but, we may be sure, a wary friendship, for the veteran in the florid and artificial style of the day; on the very day of Pelham's death he wrote from Bath to assure him of 'unalterable attachment;'[3] and he condescended to solicit a parliamentary seat from him.

But words cost little, and Pitt did not disdain profusion in them any more than in what cost more. In a letter to

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[1] Almon, i. 195.

[2] Pitt to Newcastle, July 25, 1753. Add. MSS. 32732.

[3] Pitt to Newcastle, March 6, 1754. Add. MSS. 32734.

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Lyttelton written immediately after Pelham's death, when he recommended an attitude of armed and hostile vigilance towards the new powers, he says: 'Professions of personal regard cannot be made too strongly,' and this line of conduct explains his professions to Newcastle. For how could he fail under existing circumstances to be suspicious? Had Newcastle lifted a finger to procure him the succession to Bedford? Yet no one could compete in Parliamentary authority with Pitt; and, though Murray's claims to oratorical pre-eminence might vie with his, Murray's aspirations were confined to the law. At this time, Chesterfield, the best living judge of such matters, was writing to his son, and expressing therefore his real convictions: 'Mr. Pitt and Mr. Murray are beyond comparison . . . . the best orators. They alone can inflame or quiet the House; they alone are so attended to, in that numerous and noisy assembly, that you might hear a pin fall while either was speaking.'[1] It is true that Chesterfield depreciates Pitt's matter. But the fact remains that he mentions Pitt as one of the two supreme masters of the House of Commons, the other, indeed, not having much heart in politics. The ignoring, the slighting of this great power, could not be forgiven by so aspiring a nature as Pitt's. He brooded and watched.

[1] Feb. 11, o.s. 1751. Letters, ii. 97.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW did he pass these three years? It is not easy to say, for we have so little light on his private life. No prescient Boswell marked his words and habits, or indeed had much opportunity of doing so. Few men of the same eminence have lived in such retirement as he did; we only catch glimpses. In the first place, it may be said without extravagance that his principal occupation was the gout. His gout became part of the history of England. To him it was a cruel fact. It kept him constantly disabled, and constantly away from London, ever trying new waters, principally the historical springs of Bath. Bath, indeed, was his second home. He seems to be almost always there till his marriage, and very frequently afterwards. Half his letters seem to be dated thence. At last he definitely recognised it as a home by building a house there in the Circus, which cost him 1200*l.*[1] This was in 1753. But in 1763 he disposed of this particular house, probably under some financial stress.[2] Whether he thus established himself from love of the place or from love of his friend Ralph Allen, who was Fielding's Squire Allworthy and Bath's Man of Ross, or whether he had already an ambition to represent the City in Parliament, we cannot tell. His cousin, Lord Stanhope, soon joined him and bought the houses next to his.[1] As time went on, and Pitt's fame and seclusion increased, it became more and more a political centre. There men collected who were anxious to get a word with the statesman, or at least obtain news of his health, which at times became the problem and mystery of a crisis.

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[1] Climenson's Mrs. Montague, ii. 51. Kielmansegge's Diary, 131.

[2] Meehan's Famous Houses of Bath, 112.

But his own uneasy quest of health made him seek a variety of other resorts, Astrop Wells, at the spring of St. Rumbald, Tunbridge Wells, Sunninghill, and what not. He thus became a constant participator in the tepid diversions of these sickly haunts. Gilbert West, a minor poet, whose mother was Cobham's sister, and who was one of Pitt's dearest and most intimate friends, accompanied him to Tunbridge Wells in May 1753, and writes accounts thence of his life and condition.[2] They lived together at the Stone House, which perhaps may still be identified, and which was chosen as their residence for its absolute quiet. Actual gout he seems to have welcomed as a relief from other disorders. He was at one time unable to sleep without opiates. Insomnia produced its usual effects, deep dejection, nay, complete prostration. Like all sufferers under that supreme disability, he was ready to try any remedies; musk was one of these. When the open appearance of gout relieved the sufferer of its more insidious effects, he began a course of mild dissipation. We find him giving a dinner at the New Vauxhall, enriched perhaps by the bounty of Newcastle, who was sending him choice dainties at this time; then a rural entertainment of tea in a tent, where he bade 'his French horn breathe music like the unseen genius of the wood;'[1] a diversion which seems all the more pastoral, when we remember that at the same moment Fox and Hardwicke, the Chancellor, were at each other's throats in St. Stephen's over the Marriage Act. He made excursions to view the fine parks and seats of the neighbourhood, to Penshurst, Buckhurst, and, we may presume, Eridge; we are told that he considered these expeditions as good for the mind as well as the body. Then when he got stronger he went further afield. 'I have made a tour,' he writes, 'of four or five days in Sussex, as far as Hastings; Battel Abbey is very fine, as to situation and lying of ground, together with a great command of water on one side, within an airing; Ashburnham Park most beautiful; Hurtmonceux (*sic*) very fine, curiously and dismally ugly. On the other side of Battel: Crowhurst, Colonel Pelham's, the sweetest thing in the world; more taste than anywhere, land and sea views exquisite. Beach of four or five miles to Hastings, enchanting Hastings, unique; Fairly Farm, Sir Whistler Webster's, just above it; perfect in its kind, *cum multis aliis*, &c. I long to be with you' (he is writing to John Pitt, his Dorsetshire kinsman), 'kicking my heels upon your cliffs and looking like a shepherd in Theocritus.'[2] For the sake of his mind, too, he attended 'Mr. King's lectures on philosophy, &c.,' when 'Mr. Pitt, who is desirous of attaining some knowledge in this way, makes him explain things very precisely.' In August, we must note in passing, he begged Newcastle to give him an opportunity of an interview as the duke passed near Tunbridge on the way to Sussex. Even in this amiable note he allows his pique to be visible for a moment. He entirely agrees with the policy of the brothers, but 'What I think concerning publick affairs can import nothing to any one but myself.'[1] On his recovery he went off on a round of country visits to Stowe, Hagley and Hayes; Hayes, then occupied by Mrs. Montagu, which was destined to be the shrine of his passionate affection. Stowe was a second home to him; there we have seen him play cricket, there he entered with zest into the sumptuous plans of landscape gardening, and even advised on architecture. His delight in Hagley, the seat of his friend Lyttelton, was scarcely less keen. 'My dear Billy,' he writes to William Lyttelton, then travelling in Germany, 'I am going in a few days to follow your brother to Hagley, and with all the respect due to the oaks of Germany, I would not quit the Dryads of your father's woods for all the charms of Westphalia. Io già coi campi Elisi fortunato giardin dei Semidei, la vostra ombra gentil non cangerei. You see, the idea of the Germanick body and the heroes and demigods who compose it have made me very poetical.'[2] He had, we may note, when this letter was written (August 1748), just returned from Tunbridge, and had greatly benefited by his stay there. What, we may ask in passing, has become of the efficacious nymphs of all these wells? Have they lost their virtue, or is it only the necessary faith which has disappeared?

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[1] Meehan, 111.

[2] Climenson.

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[1] Mrs. Montagu's Letters, iii. 235.

[2] Memorials of Lord Gambier, i. 61. Cf. Mrs. Montagu's Letters, iii. 240.

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[1] Pitt to Newcastle. Tunbridge, Aug. 14, 1753. Add. MSS. 32732.

[2] Phillimore, 265.

From Hagley, Pitt would visit Shenstone at his petty paradise of the Leasowes, and the grateful poet would apostrophise him:

> 'Ev'n Pitt, whose fervent periods roll
> Resistless o'er the kindling soul
> Of Senates, Councils, Kings;
> Tho' formed for Courts, vouchsafed to move
> Inglorious thro' the shepherd's grove,
> And ope his bashful springs.'

But Pitt, debarred from the sports of the field, had always taken a lively interest in the laying out of land, in planting, in landscape gardening. He had, to use his own felicitous expression, 'the prophetic eye of taste.' At the Leasowes, at Hagley, at Radway, the Warwickshire seat of Mr. Saunderson Miller,[1] at Wickham, the home of Gilbert West, and at Chevening, the delightful residence of his friend and cousin Lord Stanhope, he freely exercised his gift. He utilised it still more freely and indeed extravagantly at his own homes, for in the pursuit of this hobby he disdained all limitations. Once, when Secretary of State, he was staying with a friend near London whose grounds he had undertaken to adorn and in the evening was summoned suddenly to London. He at once collected all the servants with lanterns, and sallied forth to plant stakes in the different places that he wished to mark for plantations. In later life he ran to still greater extremes. At Burton Pynsent a bleak hill bounded his views and offended his eye. He ordered it to be instantly planted with cedars and cypresses. 'Bless me, my Lord,' said the gardener, 'all the nurseries in the county would not furnish the hundredth part required.' 'No matter; send for them from London.' And from London they were sent down by land carriage, at a vast expense. These two familiar anecdotes cannot well be omitted.

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[1] An Eighteenth Century Correspondence, 388 n. See too Harris's Hardwicke, ii. 456.

In the more moderate time with which we are dealing he was the chosen adviser of his friends, who may well have been guilty of the innocent flattery of seeking his advice with regard to his favourite hobby. His own home at this time was South Lodge in Enfield Chace, which is said to have been bequeathed to him together with 10,000*l.*, 'on this bequest that he should spend the money on improvements, and then grow tired of the place in three or four years.'[1] This seems dubious. But we are on safe ground in inferring from a letter of Legge's that he established himself there in 1748. Legge writes to him from Berlin (July 10, 1748): 'I congratulate myself and the rest of my unsound brethren upon the acquisition we have made by your admission into the respectable corps of woodmen and sawyers. I consider your Lodge as an accession to the common Stock and Republick of Sportsmen, which from its situation will bring peculiar advantages along with it, and that the woodcocks and snipes of Enfield may be visited at seasons of the year when those of Hampshire will not be so accessible. . . . As to the joiners and bricklayers, possibly too the planters of trees and levellers of walks by whom you are surrounded, don't give yourself any concern about them. They are a sort of *satellites* which I beg leave to assure you attend a man *gratis.* Nay, I have been told by one whose opinion I rate highly, that these men's works all execute themselves with a certain overplus of profit to the person who is so happy as to employ them,'[1] and he adds in a postscript a list of shrubs or trees which he recommends. Legge's playful sarcasms as to expense did not deter his friend.

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[1] Timbs, Anecdote Biography, 156, quoting from The Ambulator (1820).

By 1752 Pitt had converted South Lodge, in the opinion of his friends or flatterers, into a delightful pleasance. He had, in the fashion of those days, constructed a Temple of Pan with appropriate surroundings, which excited the admiration of critics, and is mentioned with special admiration, we are told, 'by Mr. Whately, a forgotten expert, in his "Observations on Modern Gardening," as one of the happiest efforts of well-directed and appropriate decoration.' The famous blue-stocking, Mrs. Montagu, writes of the 'shady oaks and beautiful verdure of South Lodge.' 'There can,' she says in another letter, 'hardly be a finer entertainment not only to the eyes, but to the mind, than so sweet and peaceful a scene.' Yet Pitt assured her that he had never spent an entire week there. Gilbert West paid a visit there, when suffering presumably under an attack of the gout. 'He had provided for me a wheeling-chair, by the help of which I was enabled to visit every sequestered nook, dingle, and bosky bower from side to side in that little paradise opened in the wild.'[2] So that the garden would seem to have really been a success.

But Pitt was to prove fickle to all these charms. On leaving Tunbridge Wells after the completion of his course of waters, he intended, besides long visits to Stowe and

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[1] Legge to Pitt. Berlin, July 10, 1748. Chatham MSS.

[2] Climenson, ii. 9–10. Mrs. Montagu's Letters, iii. 181.

Hagley, to pay a passing visit to Hayes, a place near Bromley, of which his friend, Mrs. Montagu, had a lease. Whether it was a case of love at first sight or not, we do not know, but Hayes was destined to be the home of his affections and the place most closely identified with himself. At the termination of Mrs. Montagu's lease in 1756, he bought it of the Harrison family, who owned it, and a letter from him is dated thence in May 1756. But in January 1765 he inherited the Burton Pynsent estate, and so, in the following October, he offered the Hayes property to his friend, the Hon. Thomas Walpole, at a fair valuation, indeed at cost price. He had wasted on it, we are told, prodigious sums, with little to show for it, for he had spent much in purchasing contiguous houses to free himself from neighbours. 'Much had gone in doing and undoing, and not a little portion in planting by torchlight, as his peremptory and imperious temper could brook no delay.' He had, moreover, Wallenstein's morbid horror of the slightest sound. Though he doted on his children, he could not bear them under the same roof; they were placed in a separate building communicating with the main structure by a winding passage. Vast sums were thus expended without adding to the value of the property. But now he was eager to leave the cherished home which had swallowed so much of his fortune, and to hurry to the new scene. His intention of retiring into Somersetshire seems to have caused some alarm among his friends, who feared that it betokened retirement from public life; but with little reason, for it was in June 1766 that the sale of Hayes to Mr. Walpole was completed, and in the succeeding month Pitt was First Minister. His accession to power was, however, accompanied by a combined attack of all his maladies, nervous and physical; and his morbid, violent cravings had, if possible, to be indulged. The most imperious of these was for Hayes, and he persuaded himself that its air was necessary to his recovery. He negotiated through Camden with Walpole, who unfortunately, in his year of residence, had become passionately attached to the place. But Pitt had become frantic. Hayes could not be mentioned before him for fear of causing immoderate excitement. 'Did he' (Pitt) 'mention Hayes?' Camden asked James Grenville, who had just visited his illustrious brother-in-law. 'Yes; and then his discourse grew very ferocious.' Lady Chatham wrote imploring and pathetic letters to Walpole, who was ready to lend indefinitely, but not to sell. It would save her husband and her children; her children's children would pray for him. Meanwhile, even if Walpole consented, they had no money to buy with. They determined to sell part of the Pynsent inheritance. But that would only suffice to pay other debts, and Hayes would have to be mortgaged as well. Nothing could better prove the insane violence of Pitt's desire. At last, in October 1767, Walpole yielded to Pitt's importunity, and in December the great man found himself once more at home. Camden declared of Walpole that 'the applause of the world and his own conscience will be his reward,' but it is not altogether pleasant to find that he did not disdain much more material compensations. Pitt had sold the house and grounds in June 1766 for 11,780*l.*, and had to buy them back in November 1767 for 17,400*l.*, a difference of 5628*l.*; so that he had to pay a smart fine for his caprices. The whole purchase came to 24,532*l.*, but this includes other items, and lands which had been added by Walpole.[1] In 1772 he appears again to have contemplated selling Hayes,[2] but he was destined to die there. All this is anticipation, but follows naturally on the topic of Pitt's country life.

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[1] Nuthall to Lady Chatham, March 25, 1768. Chatham MSS.

[2] Chatham to Nuthall, Oct. 7, 1772. Chatham MSS.

CHAPTER XV.

WE have seen that Pitt was to proceed to Hagley after leaving Tunbridge Wells in September 1753. From Hagley he sent a letter to Newcastle, which it must have cost him something to write. 'Some circumstances of my brother's transactions at Old Sarum render me uneasy at depending for my seat in next Parliament on that place. So I take the liberty to recur once more for your Grace's protection and friendship to provide for my election elsewhere.'[1] Newcastle seems at once to have offered his borough of Aldborough, and Pitt 'can never express himself sufficiently grateful for all your favours.'[2] From Hagley (October 1753) he proceeded to Bath for a fresh course, and seems to have remained there a helpless cripple for no less than seven months, though he was in London for a debate in November. Never was illness so untimely, as events of vital importance to him were about to take place. For on March 6, 1754, Pelham died, and all was confusion. 'Now I shall have no more peace,' said the shrewd old King. 'I never saw the King under such deep concern since the Queen's death,' wrote Hardwicke. And indeed the situation was full of alarming possibilities. For Pelham had become the unobtrusive but indispensable man, like the mediocre and forgotten Liverpool, who kept the balance between fierce rivalries and discordant opinions for fifteen years.

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[1] October 6, 1753. Add. MSS. 32733.

[2] October 13, 1753. Add. MSS. 32733.

There seems no great complication in Pelham's character. He was a Whig politician, trained under Walpole, but also under an intolerable brother who exercised the utmost prerogative of his birthright. His portrait, by Hoare, indicates something catlike, and he had much of feline caution and timidity. But among the politicians of that day he seems to have been comparatively simple and direct; and no man of his day was so fit for the position of Prime Minister in view of his own qualifications, and the conditions of the office at that time. He was indeed an inferior Walpole. He seems moreover to have been almost devoid of personal ambition; the highest places were thrust on him without his seeking them. At the fall of Walpole, in spite of Walpole's urgent instances that he should accept the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, which besides the eminence of the office would have given him the succession to Lord Wilmington, he insisted on remaining Paymaster, a post which, as we have seen, even without the recognised perquisites, had great material attractions, and which with them was capable of enchaining so powerful a parliamentarian as Fox. On the death of Wilmington, by Walpole's influence, he obtained the highest place; though Walpole had not merely to inspire the King, but to overcome Pelham's reluctance. We may imagine that Walpole would urge on his Sovereign that Pelham was the only House of Commons man available, that he was eminently safe, that he represented Newcastle's parliamentary influence, and that Newcastle represented Hardwicke, who embodied the brains of the Cabinet; for those of Carteret were too dangerous to trust.

As First Minister Pelham had many difficulties to contend with, but not greater than those which always must encompass that position. There was the King, with violent prejudices and a Hanoverian policy, neither of which he shared. Then there was his brother, who regarded himself as at least his junior's equal, and whose petulance, jealousy, and suspicion had to be kept in a constant state of arduous appeasement. Thirdly, there was Pitt, whom the King could not do with and Pelham could not do without; an element of incalculable explosion which anything might ignite.

He seems to have steered his course somewhat passively through these complications; content so long as he could ward off domestic catastrophe, and prevent war with its consequent expenditure; though the fates in neither case were propitious. His only real conviction indeed was for peace and economy; for the heritage of Walpole's policy had devolved upon him, without Walpole's character and ability. Three years before the end, as we have seen, he had sickened of his task and of his helplessness amid the jarring elements of discord, but he had not been permitted to retire. He was indeed the necessary man; a good debater, a good administrator, a minister with a conscience for the public, a leader or a figurehead with Newcastle's parliamentary power behind him, a tactician who managed to keep Pitt at bay, dangerous but muzzled. Men of this stamp are kept in harness to the end.

He died on March 6, and the news found Pitt, on March 7, crippled and immovable at Bath. His feet were impotent with gout, but his brain and hands were evidently unaffected. He at once despatched a brief note of condolence to Newcastle, 'whose grief must be inconsolable as its cause is irreparable. You have a great occasion for all your strength of mind to exert itself. Exercise it for the sake of your master and your country, and may all good men support you. I have the gout in both feet and am totally unable to travel.'[1] To Lyttelton and the Grenvilles he wrote on the same day at length 'the breaking of first thoughts to be confined to you four,'[2] enclosed in a covering letter to Temple, saying that he was worn down with pain, and incapable of motion. But he was none the less vigilant with regard to the least ripple on the surface of politics, 'I heard some time since that the Princess of Wales inquired after my health: an honour which I received with much pleasure, as not void, perhaps of some meaning.'[3] Newcastle at once answered Pitt's note of condolence, for we find Pitt acknowledging the reply on March 11, and mentioning a letter written to him by Hardwicke, under Newcastle's authority, 'with regard to some things in deliberation for the settling the Government in the House of Commons and the direction of the affairs of the Treasury. My answer is in a letter to Sir George Lyttelton.'[4] This was practically giving powers to Lyttelton to negotiate with Newcastle as Pitt's representative; a strange choice, when we read in the covering letter to Temple: 'let me recommend to my dear Lord to preach prudence and reserve to our friend Sir George, and, if he can, inspire him with his own.' Lyttelton indeed was not destined ever to earn fame as a negotiator.

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[1] Pitt to Newcastle, March 7, 1754. Add. MSS. 32734.

[2] Grenville Papers, i. 109.

[3] Ib. i. 111.

[4] Pitt to Newcastle, March 11, 1754. Add. MSS. 32734.

And now it is necessary to give the principal passages of this letter to Lyttelton and the Cousinhood, which would have been a fuller and clearer manifesto had not all politicians at that time felt a well-grounded apprehension that their letters would be opened and read before they were delivered. Fulness and clearness were therefore the last qualities aimed at in their epistolary style, and inquiring posterity rues the result.

MR. PITT TO SIR GEORGE LYTTELTON AND THE GRENVILLE BROTHERS.

March 7, 1754.

My dearest Friends,—[Then follows pompous regrets for Pelham's 'utterly irreparable' loss.] I will offer to the consideration of my friends but two things: the object to be wished for, the public; and the means; which the object itself seems to suggest; for the pursuit of it, my own object for the public, is, to support the King in quiet as long as he may have to live; and to strengthen the hands of the Princess of Wales, as much as may be, in order to maintain her power in the Government, in case of the misfortune of the King's demise. The means, as I said, suggest themselves: an union of all those in action who are really already united in their wishes as to the object: this might easily be effected, but it is my opinion, it will certainly not be done.

As to the nomination of a Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Fox in point of party, seniority in the Corps, and I think ability for Treasury and House of Commons business stands, upon the whole, first of any.

Doctor Lee if his health permits is Papabilis, and in some views very desirable. Te Quinte Catule, my dear George Grenville, would be my nomination.

A fourth idea I will mention, which if practicable, and worth the person's while, might have great strength and efficiency for Government in it, and be perfectly adapted to the main future contingent object, could it be tempered so as to reconcile the Whigs to it: I mean to secularise, if I may use the expression, the Solicitor-General,[1] and make him Chancellor of the Exchequer. I call this an idea only; but I think it not visionary, were it accompanied by proper temperaments. I write these thoughts for Lord Temple, his brothers' and Sir George Lyttelton's consideration only, or rather as a communication of my first thoughts, upon an emergency that has too much importance and delicacy, as well as danger in it, to whoever delivers their opinion freely, to be imparted any farther.

I am utterly unable to travel, nor can guess when I shall be able: this situation is most unfortunate. I am overpowered with gout, rather than relieved, but expect to be better for it. My dear friends over-rate infinitely the importance of my health, were it established: something I might weigh in such a scale as the present, but you, who have health to act, cannot fail to weigh much, if united in views.

I will join you the first moment I am able, for letters cannot exchange one's thoughts upon matters so complicated, extensive and delicate.

I don't a little wonder I have had no express from another quarter.[2]

I repeat again, that what I have said are the breakings of first thoughts, to be confined to you four; and the looseness, and want of form in them, to be, I trust, excused in consideration of the state of mind and body of

Your ever most affectionate, W. Pitt.

As nothing is so delicate and dangerous, as every word uttered upon the present *unexplained* state of things, I mean *unexplained*, as to the King's inclinations towards Mr. Fox, and his real desire to have his own act of Regency, as it is called, maintained in the hands of the Princess; too much caution, reserve, and silence cannot be observed towards any who come to fish or sound your dispositions, without authority to make direct propositions. If eyes are really turned towards any connection of men, as a resource against dangers apprehended, that set of men cannot, though willing, answer the expectation without countenance, and additional consideration and weight added to them, by marks of Royal favour, one of the connection put into the Cabinet, and called to a real participation of councils and business. How our little connection has stood at all, under all depression and discountenance, or has an existence in the eyes of the public, I don't understand : that it should continue to do so, without an attribution of some new strength and consideration, arising from a real share in Government, I have difficulty to believe.

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[1] Murray.

[2] This seems an allusion either to Leicester House, or, less probably, to Newcastle.

I am, however, resolved to listen to no suggestions of certain feelings, however founded, but to go as straight as my poor judgment will direct me, to the sole object of public good.

I don't think quitting of offices at all advisable, for public or private accounts : but as to answering any further purposes in the House of Commons, that must depend on the King's will and pleasure to enable us so to do.[1]

It will be observed that Pitt does not mention the Treasury; and he probably, though in his letter to Temple of the same date he speaks of the Duke's 'ability as Secretary of State,' took it for granted that Newcastle would succeed his brother; a proof of his perception. Yet Walpole tells us that it was to the astonishment of all men that Newcastle took the Treasury five days later.

Next we may notice that he does not mention the Secretaryship of State to be vacated by Newcastle, which would seem to show that that office had long been destined by the cousinhood for himself.

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[1] Grenville Papers, i. 106.

The postscript is extremely obscure, as it was probably intended to be. It seems to enjoin the greatest caution in dealing with any vague overtures which may be made, until it is known whether the King means to give his confidence to Fox, and whether he means to maintain the Regency as then established. But this phrase about the Regency is almost unintelligible.

The last sentence in the postscript is the clearest of the letter. Let us remain in office, but whether we exert ourselves there or remain in sullen silence must depend on the attitude of the King.

All this is enclosed in a covering letter to Temple—

Mr. Pitt to Earl Temple.

March 7, 1754.

My dear Lord,—I return my answer to Jemmy's and Sir George's dispatch directed to you, and accompany it with this line to give you my apprehensions of Sir George's want of discretion and address, in such soundings as will be, and have been, made upon him, with regard to the disposition of his friends.

I beg your Lordship will be so good to convene your brothers and Sir George, and communicate my letter to them which is addressed to you jointly. It is a most untoward circumstance that I cannot set out immediately to join you. I am extremely crippled and worn down with pain, which still continues. I make what efforts I can, and am carried out to breathe a little air. I write this hardly legible scrawl in my chaise.

Let me recommend to my dear Lord to preach prudence and reserve to our friend Sir George, and if he can, to inspire him with his own.

I heard some time since that the Princess inquired after my health; an honour which I received with much pleasure, as not void, perhaps, of some meaning.

I have writ more to-day than my weak state, under such a shock as the news of to-day, will well permit.

Believe me, my dearest Lord,
Ever most affectionately yours,
W. Pitt.

Fox will be Chancellor of the Exchequer, notwithstanding any reluctancy to yield to it in the Ministers; George Grenville may be offered Secretary at War; I am sure he ought to be so. I advise his acceptance. The Chancellor is the only resource; his wisdom, temper, and authority, joined to the Duke of Newcastle's ability as Secretary of State, are the dependance for Government. The Duke of Newcastle alone is feeble, this not to Sir George.[1]

Pitt's next step was to send two letters, in the same cover, to Lyttelton; one a confidential letter, the other, an ostensible one, to be sent to Hardwicke. The confidential letter, which follows, is striking, and contains as much of Pitt's plan of operations at this crisis as any that we possess.

Bath, March 10*th*, 1754.

Dear Lyttelton,—I am much obliged to you for your dispatch, and am highly satisfied with the necessary reserve you have kept with respect to the dispositions of yourself and friends. Indeed, the conjuncture itself, and more especially our peculiar situation, require much caution and measure in all our answers, in order to act like honest men, who determine to adhere to the public great object; as well as men who would not be treated like children. I am far from meaning to recommend a sullen, dark, much less a double conduct. All I mean is to lay down a plan to ourselves; which is, to support the King's Government in present, and maintain the Princess's authority and power in a future, contingency. As a necessary consequence of this system, I wish to see as little power in Fox's hands as possible, because he is incompatible with the main part, and indeed of the whole, of this plan; but I mean not to open myself to whoever pleases to sound my dispositions, with regard to persons especially, and by premature declarations deprive ourselves of the only chance we have of deriving any consideration to ourselves from the mutual fears and animosities of different factions in court: and expose ourselves to the resentment and malice in the *closet* of the one without stipulations or security for the good offices and weight of the other there in our favour.

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[1] Grenville Papers, i. 110.

But do I mean, then, an absolute reserve, which has little less than the air of hostility towards our friends (such as they are) at Court, or at least, bear too plainly the indications of intending a third party or flying squadron? By no means. Nothing would, in my poor judgment, be so unfit and dangerous for us. I would be open and explicit (but only on proper occasions) 'that, I was most willing to support his Majesty's Government upon such a proper plan as I doubted not his Majesty, by the advice of his Ministers, would frame; in order to supply, the best that may be, the irreparable loss the King has sustained in Mr. Pelham's death: in order to secure the King ease for his life and future security to his family and to the kingdom: that my regards to the ministers in being were too well known to need any declarations;' this and the like, which may be vary'd for ever, is answer enough to any *sounder*. As to any things said by Principals in personal conference, as that of the Chancellor with you, another manner of talking will be proper, though still conformable to the same private plan which you shall resolve to pursue. Professions of personal regard cannot be made too strongly; but as to matter, generals are to be answered with generals; particulars, if you are led into them, need not at all be shunn'd; and if treated with common prudence and presence of mind, can not be greatly used to a man's prejudice; if he says nothing that implies specific engagements, without knowing specifically what he is to trust to reciprocally. Within these limitations, it seems to me, that a man whose intentions are clear and right, may talk without putting himself at another's mercy or offending him by a dark and mysterious reserve.

I think it best to throw my answer to the Chancellor into a separate piece of paper, that you may send it to his lordship. I am sorry to be forced to answer in writing, because, not seeing the party, it is not possible to throw in necessary qualifications and additions or retractions, according to the impression things make.

As far as, my dear Lyttelton, you are so good to relate your several conversations upon the present situation, I highly applaud your prudence. I hope you neither have nor will drop a word of menace, and that you will always bear in mind that my personal connection with the Duke of Newcastle, has a peculiar circumstance,[1] which yours and that of your friends has not. One cannot be too explicit in conversing at this unhappy distance on matters of this delicate and critical nature. I will, therefore, commit tautology, and repeat what I said in my former dispatch, viz., that it enters not the least into my plans to intimate quitting the King's service; giving trouble, if not satisfied, to Government. The essence of it exists in this: attachment to the King's service, and zeal for the ease and quiet of his life, and stability and strength to future government under the Princess; this declared openly and explicitly *to the ministers.* The reserve I would use should be with regard to listing in particular subdivisions, and thereby not freeing persons from those fears which will alone quicken them to give us some consideration for their own sakes: but this is to be done *negatively* only, by eluding explicit declarations with regard to persons especially; but by *intimations of a possibility of our following our resentments;* for, indeed, dear Sir George, I am determined not to go into faction. Upon the whole, the mutual fears in Court open to our connexion some room for importance and weight, in the course of affairs: in order to profit by this situation, we must not be out of office: and the strongest argument of all to enforce that, is, that Fox is too odious to last for ever, and G. Grenville must be next nominated under any Government.

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[1] Pitt was member for Aldborough, one of Newcastle's boroughs.

I am too lame to move.

Your ever affectionate,
W. PITT.[1]

Then follows the apparent and ostensible letter to be shown to the Chancellor. It is from the nature of it artificial and need not be quoted in full. But it contains one remarkable passage in which Pitt claims credit for having renounced opposition and the accompanying popularity when he was convinced that there might be danger to the reigning family from his carrying it further. The assertion is striking and daring, and no doubt Pitt did join the Government while Charles Edward was still in arms.

Bath, March 11*th*, 1754.

My dear Sir George.—I beg you will be so good to assure my Lord Chancellor, in my name, of my most humble services and many very grateful acknowledgments for his Lordship's obliging wishes for my health. . . . . I can never sufficiently express the high sense I have of the great honours of my Lord Chancellor's much too favourable opinion of his humble servant; but I am so truly and deeply conscious of so many of my wants in Parliament and out of it, to supply in the smallest degree this irreparable loss, that I can say with much truth were my health restored and his Majesty brought from the dearth of subjects to hear of my name for so great a charge, I should wish to decline the honour, even though accompany'd with the attribution of all the weight and strength which the good opinion and confidence of the master cannot fail to add to a servant; but under impressions in the Royal mind

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[1] Phillimore's Lyttelton, 449.

> towards me, the reverse of these, what must be the vanity which would attempt it? These prejudices, however so successfully suggested and hitherto so unsuccessfully attempted to be removed, shall not abate my zeal for his Majesty's service, though they have so effectually disarmed me of all means of being useful to it. I need not suggest to his Lordship that consideration and weight in the House of Commons arises generally but from one of two causes—the protection and countenance of the Crown, visibly manifested by marks of Royal favour at Court, or from weight in the country, sometimes arising from opposition to the public measures. This latter sort of consideration it is a great satisfaction to me to reflect I parted with, as soon as I became convinced there might be danger to the family from pursuing opposition any further; and I need not say I have not had the honour to receive any of the former since I became the King's servant. . . . . Perhaps some of my friends may not labour under all the prejudices that I do. I have reason to believe they do not: in that case should Mr. Fox be Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary at War is to be filled up. . . . .[1]

He does not follow up this innuendo, nor was it necessary. The next day he writes frankly to Temple, who seems to have been much in Pitt's confidence at this time. Taken in conjunction with the secret letter to Lyttelton of March 10, the plan of operations is easily understood. We will leave ministers 'under the impression of their own fears and resentments, the only friends we shall ever have at Court, but to say not a syllable which can scatter terrors or imply menaces.' Pitt's plan, in a sentence, was to hang over the Government like a thundercloud, dark, silent, menacing, possibly to be dispelled, but ready and in an instant to pour destruction down.

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[1] Phillimore's Lyttelton, 453.

Mr. Pitt to Earl Temple.

Bath, March 11, 1754.

My dearest Lord,—I hope you will not disapprove my answer to Lord Chancellor. I include in you your brothers, for your Lordship's name is Legion. You will see the answer contains my whole poor plan; the essence of which is to talk modestly, to declare attachment to the *King's* government, and the future plan *under the Princess*, neither to intend nor intimate the quitting the service, to give no terrors by talking big, to make no declarations of thinking ourselves free by Mr. Pelham's death, to look out and fish in troubled waters, and perhaps help trouble them in order to fish the better: but to profess and to resolve *bona fide* to act like public men in a dangerous conjuncture for our country, and support Government when they will please to settle it; to let them see we shall do this from *principles of public good*, not as the *bubbles* of a few fair words, without effects (all this civilly), and to be collected by them, not expressed by us; to leave them under the impressions of their own fears and resentments, the only friends we shall ever have at Court, but to say not a syllable which can scatter terrors or imply menaces. Their fears will increase by what we *avoid saying concerning persons* (though what I think of Fox, etc., is much fixed), and by *saying very explicitly*, as I have (but civilly), that we have our eyes open to our situation at Court, and the foul play we have had offered us in the Closet: to wait the working of all these things in offices, the best we can have, but in offices.

My judgment tells me, my dear Lord, that this simple plan steadily pursued will once again, before it be long, give some weight to a connection, long depressed, and yet still not annihilated. Mr. Fox's having called at my door early the morning Mr. Pelham died is, I suppose, no secret, and a lucky incident, in my opinion. I have a post letter from the Duke of Newcastle, a very obliging one. I heartily pity him, he suffers a great deal for his loss.

Give me leave to recommend to your Lordship a little gathering of friends about you at dinners, without ostentation. Stanley, who will be in Parliament: some attention to Sir Richard Lyttelton I should think proper; a dinner to the Yorkes very seasonable; and, before things are settled, any of the Princess of Wales's Court. John Pitt not to be forgot: I know the Duke of B—— nibbles at him: in short liez commerce with as many members of Parliament, who may be open to our purposes, as your Lordship can. Pardon, my dear Lord, all this freedom, but the conjuncture is made to awaken men, and there is room for action. I have no doubt George Grenville's turn must come. Fox is odious, and will have difficulty to stand in a future time. I mend a little. I cannot express my impatience to be with you.

W. Pitt.[1]

On March 18, Lyttelton writes to Grenville to ask if he shall send an express down to Pitt as 'he will be impatient to hear particulars,' with the news that Grenville and the writer had accepted office, and 'things are not as much settled as they are likely to be till the dissolution of parliament. I have had no answer from him to my last letter; have you?' But this unanswered letter may not have reached its destination, or was destitute of certain intelligence, for we find Pitt writing to Lyttelton on March 20: 'I conclude that things still remain unsettled, because I hear nothing from you or my other friends relating to them.' So he is solacing himself by reading Bolingbroke's works. Their arrogance, he says, is so excessive, that, great as is the performance, it often becomes ridiculous. There was, he remembers, not many years ago, a man in Bedlam, a scholar of fine parts, who used to entertain all the spectators of that asylum with very rational discourses, and talked with wit and eloquence; but always concluded by assuring his hearers that he alone of all his hearers was in his right senses, and they and all mankind were mad, and had conspired to put him in that place; Bolingbroke reminds Pitt of this lunatic. There was indeed no love lost between the two men. Pitt had not treated the elder statesman with the deference paid to him by the adoring circle in which he lived, and Bolingbroke had then charged Pitt with the same fault which Pitt now found in Bolingbroke. On March 24, in a letter to Grenville, he pursues the same theme, and dubs Bolingbroke the 'intellectual Sampson of Battersea.' But six weeks afterwards, we find him warmly recommending Bolingbroke's 'Remarks on the History of England' to his nephew 'to be studied and almost got by heart for the inimitable beauty of the style as well as the matter.'

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[1] Grenville Papers, i. 112.

And now comes a letter of which not a word must be omitted, the memorable letter to Newcastle of March 24, long supposed to be lost, but now discovered among the Newcastle Papers. It was penned under the just resentment caused by the knowledge of the arrangements for office from which he had been insultingly ignored. It is, so far as we know, the greatest that Pitt ever wrote, full of scornful humility, suppressed passion, and pointed insinuation. Unlike most of his letters it needs no interpretation, it speaks for itself. That bitterness of indignation, which is said to produce poetry, has in this instance evolved clearness and force. Towards the end, after speaking of resignation, and of his wish for retirement, he utters this prophecy, baleful to Newcastle, who should have remembered that the prophet had it in his power to fulfil his own prediction. 'Indeed, my lord, the inside of the House must be consider'd in other respects besides merely numbers, or the reins of government will soon slip or be wrested out of any minister's hands.' A few months were to bring home to the duke the truth of this prediction.

PITT TO NEWCASTLE.

Bath, 24 *March*, 1754.

My Lord Duke, — I have heard with the highest satisfaction by a message from S^r George Lyttelton the effectual proofs of his Majesty's great kindness and firm confidence in your Grace for the conduct of his Government. You have certainly taken most wisely the Province of the Treasury to yourself, where the powers of Government reside, and which at this particular crisis of a General Election may lay the foundations of the future political system so fast as not to be shaken hereafter. But this will depend upon many concomitant circumstances. For the present the nation may say with consolation, *uno avulso non deficit alter aureus.* The power of the Purse in the hands of the same family may, I trust, be so used as to fix all other power there along with it. Amidst all the real satisfaction I feel on this great measure so happily taken, it is with infinite reluctance that I am forced to return to the mortifying situation of your Grace's humblest servant and to add some few considerations to those, which, I have the satisfaction to learn from S^r George Lyttelton, had the honour to be receiv'd by your Grace and my Lord Chancellor without disapprobation. The difficulties grow so fast upon me by the repetition and multiplication of most painfull and too visible humiliations that my small store of prudence suggests no longer to me any means of colouring them to the world; nor of repairing them to my own mind consistently with my unshaken purpose to do nothing on any provocation to disturb the quiet of the King and the ease and stability of present and future Government.

Permit, my Lord, a man, whose affectionate attachment to your Grace, I believe, you don't doubt, to expose simply to your view his situation, and then let me entreat your Grace (if you can divest your mind of the great disparity between us) to transport yourself for a moment into my place. From the time I had the honour to come into the King's service, I have never been wanting in my most zealous endeavours in Parliament on the points that laboured the most, those of military discipline and foreign affairs; nor have I differ'd on any whatever, but the too small number of seamen one year, which was admitted to be so the next; and on a crying complaint against General Anstruther: for these crimes how am I punish'd? Be the want of subjects ever so great and the force of the conjuncture ever so cogent, be my best friends and protectors ever so much at the head of Government, an indelible negative is fixed against my name. Since I had the honour to return that answer to the Chancellor which Your Grace and his Lordship were pleas'd not to disapprove, how have mortifications been multiply'd upon me. One Chancellor of the Exchequer over me was at that time destin'd, Mr. Fox: since that time a second, Mr. Legge, is fixt: a Secretary of State is next to be look'd for in the House of Commons; Mr. Fox is again put over me and destin'd to that office: he refuses the seals: Sir Thomas Robinson is immediately put over me and is now in possession of that great office. I sincerely think both these high employments much better fill'd than I cou'd supply either of them in many respects. Mr. Legge I truely and cordially esteem and love. Sir Thos. Robinson, with whom I have not the honour to live in the same intimacy, I sincerely believe to be a gentleman of much worth and ability. Nevertheless I will venture to appeal to your Grace's candour and justice whether upon such feeble pretensions as twenty years' use of Parliament may have given me, I have not some cause to feel (as I do most deeply) so many repeated and visible humiliations. I have troubled your Grace so long on this painfull subject that I may have nothing disagreeable to say, when I have the honour to wait on you; as well as that I think it fit your Grace shou'd know the whole heart of a faithfull servant, who is conscious of nothing towards your Grace which he wishes to conceal from you. In my degraded situation in parliament, an active part there I am sure your Grace is too equitable to desire me to take; for otherwise than as an associate and in equal rank with those charg'd with Government there, I never can take such a part.

I will confess I had flatter'd myself that the interests of your Grace's own power were so concern'd to bring forward an instrument of your own raising in the House of Commons that you cou'd not let pass this decisive occasion without surmounting in the royal mind the unfavourable impressions I have the unhappiness to be under; and that the seals (at least when refus'd by Mr. Fox) might have been destin'd as soon as an opening cou'd be made in the King's mind in my favour instead of being immediately put into other hands. Things standing as they do, whether I can continue in office without losing myself in the opinion of the world is become a matter of very painfull doubt to me. If any thing can colour with any air of decency such an acquiescence, it can only be the consideration given to my friends and some degree of softening obtain'd in his Majesty's mind towards me. Mr Pelham destin'd Sir George Lyttelton to be cofferer, whenever that office shou'd open, and there can be no shadow of difficulty in Mr Grenville being made Treasurer of the Navy. Weighed in the fair scale of usefulness to the King's business in Parliament, they can have no competitors that deserve to stand in their way. I have submitted these things to your Grace with a frankness you had hitherto been so good to tolerate in me, however inferior. I wou'd not have done it so fully for my own regard alone, were I not certain that your Grace's interests are more concern'd in it than mine: because I am most sure that my mind carries me more strongly towards retreat than towards courts and business. Indeed, My Lord, the inside of the House must be consider'd in other respects besides merely numbers, or the reins of Government will soon slip or be wrested out of any minister's hands. If I have spoken too freely, I humbly beg your Grace's pardon: and entreat you to impute my freedom to the most sincere and unalterable attachment of a man who never will conceal his heart, and who can complain without alienation of mind and remonstrate without resentment.

I have the honour to be, etc. etc.

W. PITT.

I cannot hope to leave Bath in less than a week. My health seems much mended by my gout.[1]

This letter was enclosed to Lyttelton under flying seal to be communicated to the Grenvilles. Pitt, writing the same day to Temple, says: 'I hope my letter to the Duke of Newcastle will meet with the fraternal approbation. It is strong, but not hostile, and will, I believe, operate some effect. I am still more strongly fixed in my judgement that the place of importance is employment, in the present unsettled conjuncture. It may not to us be the place of dignity, but sure I am it is that of the former. I see, as your Lordship does, the treatment we have had: I feel it as deeply, but I believe, not so warmly. I don't suffer my feelings to warp the only plan I can form that has any tendency or meaning. For making ourselves felt, by disturbing Government, I think would prove hurtful to the public, not reputable to ourselves, and beneficial in the end, only to others. All Achilles as you are, Impiger, Iracundus, etc., what would avail us to sail back a few myrmidons to Thessaly! Go over to the Trojans, to be revenged, we none of us can bear the thought of. What then remains? The conduct of the much-enduring man, who by temper, patience, and persevering prudence, became *adversis rerum immersabilis undis.*'

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[1] Add. MSS. 32734. f. 322.

He adds another postscript of caution: 'Be so good as not to leave my letters in your pockets, but lock them up or burn them, and caution Sir George to do the same.'[1] Secrecy was of the essence of his scheme. Should Newcastle or the Chancellor understand the part that he designed to play, they would have an advantage in the game.

On April 2 Pitt writes to jog Newcastle's memory in a note about the Aldborough election: 'I had expected to hear from you, but I know the multiplicity of your business.'[2] He need not have feared that his letter had been overlooked. So little was this the case that, no doubt after anxious and protracted conferences, Newcastle and Hardwicke were both writing to him on this very day long and elaborate apologies. Hardwicke's is a document, as might be expected, of great but inadequate skill.[3] It gives him much concern to find that Pitt is 'under apprehensions of *some* neglect on this decisive occasion.' He is not altogether surprised. Could Pitt only have heard how warmly Hardwicke pressed his claims! But there are certain things which ministers cannot do directly. These must be left to 'time and incidents and perhaps ill-judging opponents.' Fox's pressing for larger powers than the King would give had no doubt helped the cause of Pitt, and Newcastle's being at the head of the Government whose devotion to Pitt was so notorious would further it still more. He concludes by hoping with sincerity that Pitt would take an active part, though no doubt had he seen the direction in which his wish was fulfilled, he would have withdrawn it with greater emphasis. This stripped of verbiage seems the bone of this long letter.

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[1] Grenville Papers, i. 116.

[2] Pitt to Newcastle, April 2, 1754. Add. MSS. 32735. The more elaborate draft of this letter is given with a wrong date in the Chatham Corr. i. 85.

[3] Chatham Corr. i. 89.

Behind Hardwicke shuffles Newcastle. 'Feel for me,' he plaintively exclaims, 'for my melancholy and distressed situation: compelled to leave the department of which I was a master to one with which I was entirely ignorant, exposed to envy and reproach, and sure of nothing but the comfort of an honest heart.' It had first been suggested that Fox should be Secretary of State to make Newcastle's elevation more palatable to his opponents. But 'that for certain reasons did not take place; upon which the King himself, of his own motion declared Sir Thomas Robinson Secretary of State.' And this Pitt's friends thought the best practicable arrangement. For though an excellent man for the office, Robinson had not Parliamentary talents which could excite jealousy, and as, from circumstances deeply lamented by Newcastle, 'it was impossible to put one into that office who had all the necessary qualifications both within and out of the House,' there seemed nothing better to do than to appoint the inoffensive Sir Thomas. All interspersed with copious assurances of love and affection. 'I honour, esteem, and . . . . most sincerely love you.'[1]

Pitt replies to Newcastle in a letter which it is necessary to print in full from the original in the Newcastle Papers, for this is very different from the draft printed in the Chatham Correspondence.

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[1] Chatham Corr. i. 95.

Pitt to Newcastle.

Bath, 4 *Apr*. 1754.

My Lord Duke,—I was honour'd with your Grace's letter of ye 2nd inst. yesterday evening. How shall I find words to express my sense of the great condescension and kindness of expression with which it is writ? It would be making but an ill return to so much goodness, were I to go back far into the disagreeable subject that has occasion'd your Grace so much trouble, and wou'd be tearing and wounding your good nature to little purpose. Whatever my sensations are, it is sufficient that I have once freely laid them before you, and that your Grace has had the indulgence to pardon that freedom, which I thought I used both to your Grace and myself. As for the rest, my attachment shall be ever found as unalterable to Government as my inability to be of any material use to it is become manifest to all the world. I will enter again, but for a word or two, into a subject your Grace shall be troubled no more with. It is most obliging to suggest as consolations to me that I might have been much more mortify'd under another management than under the present: but I will freely own I shou'd have felt myself far less personally humiliated, had Mr. Fox been placed by the King's favour at the head of the House of Commons, than I am at present: in that case the necessity wou'd have been apparent: the ability of the subject wou'd in some degree have warranted the thing. I shou'd indeed have been much mortify'd for your Grace and for my Lord Chancellor: very little for my own particular. Cou'd Mr. Murray's situation have allow'd him to be placed at the head of the House of Commons, I shou'd have served under him with the greatest pleasure: I acknowledge as much as the rest of the world do his superiority in every respect. My mortification arises not from silly pride, but from being evidently excluded by a negative personal to me (now and for ever) flowing from a displeasure utterly irremovable. As to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, I hope your Grace cannot think me fill'd with so impertinent a vanity as to imagine it a disparagement to me to serve under the Duke of Newcastle at the head of the Treasury: but, my Lord, had I been proposed for that honour and the King been once reconciled to the thought of me, my honour wou'd have been saved and I shou'd with pleasure have declin'd the charge in favour of Mr. Legge from a just regard to his Majesty's service. I know my health, at best, is too precarious a thing to expose his Majesty's affairs in Parliament to suffer delay, perhaps in the middle of a session by being in such improper hands. As to the other great office, many circumstances of it render an uninterrupted health not so absolutely necessary to the discharge of it. Were I to fail in it from want of health, or, what is still more likely, from want of ability and a sufficient knowledge of foreign affairs, a fitter person might at any time be substituted without material inconvenience to publick business. To conclude, my Lord, and to release your Grace from a troublesome correspondent, give me leave to recur to your Grace's equity and candour: when the suffrage of the party in one instance, and a higher nomination, the Royal designation in another, operate to the eternal precluding of a man's name being so much as brought in question, what reasonable wish can remain for a man so circumstanced (under a first resolution, on no account to disturb Government) but that of a decent retreat, a retreat of respect, not resentment: of despair of being ever accepted to equal terms with others, be his poor endeavours ever so zealous. Very few have been the advantages and honours of my life: but among the first of them I shall ever esteem the honour of your Grace's good opinion: to that good opinion and protection I recommend myself: and hope from it that some retreat, neither disagreeable nor dishonourable, may (when practicable) be open'd to me. I see with great joy S^{r} George Lyttelton and Mr. Grenville in this arrangement, where they ought to be. I am persuaded they will be of the greatest advantage to your Grace's system. They are both connected in friendship with Mr. Legge and with Mr. Murray, who in effect is the greatest strength of it in parliament. May every kind of satisfaction and honour attend your Grace's labours for his Majesty's service. I have the honour, etc. etc.

W. PITT.

I wrote your Grace by the Post ye 2nd inst. which I hope came to your hands.'[1]

Two days afterwards he answered Hardwicke. In this letter the notable passage is that in which he points to retreat, having in his mind, it would seem, some specific office:—'The weight of irremovable royal displeasure is a load too great to move under; it must crush any man; it has sunk and broken me. I succumb, and wish for nothing but a decent and innocent retreat. . . . . To speak without a figure I will presume . . . . to tell my utmost wish; it is that a retreat, not void of advantage or derogatory to the rank of the office I hold, might, as soon as practicable, be opened to me. . . . . Out of his Grace's (Newcastle's) immediate province accommodations of this kind arise.'[2]

By the same messenger Pitt wrote to Lyttelton one of the terse notes which throw a hundredfold more light on his real temper than his more pompous lucubrations, and which are infinitely more readable than the long rigmaroles which he wrote to official persons. He professes in this to be more than satisfied with Newcastle's answer, and also with the Chancellor's.

. . . . The Duke of Newcastle's letter to me is not only in a temper very different from what you saw his Grace in, but is writ with a condescension, and in terms so flattering, that it pains me. I am almost tempted to think there is kindness at the bottom of it, *which, if left to itself, would before now have shewed itself* in effects. If I have not the fruit, I have the leaves of it in abundance; a beautiful foliage of fine words. . . . . The Chancellor's letter is the most condescending, friendly, obliging thing that can be imagined. I have the deepest sense of his goodness for me; but I am really compelled, by every reason fit for a man to listen to, to resist (as to the point of activity in Parliament) farther than I like to do. I have intimated retreat and pointed out such a one in general as I shall really like. Resolved not to disturb Government; I desire to be released from the oar of Parliamentary drudgery. I am (un)willing[1] to sit there and be ready to be called out into action when the Duke of Newcastle's personal interests might require, or Government should deign to employ me as an instrument. I am not fond of making speeches (though some may think I am). I never cultivated the talent, but as an instrument of action in a country like ours. . . . .[2]

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[1] Add. MSS. 32735. f. 21.

[2] Harris's Hardwicke, iii. 8.

The places were now all filled: the Government was made up: Pitt was excluded and proscribed. Fox or Murray, he admitted, might reasonably be put over his head. But the promotion of Robinson was a personal outrage. So he would no longer sit in Parliament as a subordinate and almost a creature of Newcastle's, member for one of his boroughs, Paymaster in his administration. Pitt was now determined to be free. He would remain out of London, and they might see how they got on without him. When he did return to London they should realise what they had lost. Meanwhile he would occupy himself with a little architecture and a little gardening; all that he was fit for, as he would assure inquirers with obsequious sarcasm.

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[1] The sense shows clearly that Pitt intended to write 'unwilling.'

[2] Phillimore, 466.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN the meantime all had been settled by hasty arrangements in London. Owing to Newcastle's 'overwhelming 'affliction,' Hardwicke tells us that he himself was compelled to step forward as a 'kind of minister *ab aratro*,' and make the necessary arrangements. A faint offer of the Treasury was made to the Duke of Devonshire, which he wisely declined, and, six days after the death of Pelham, Newcastle, in spite of his overwhelming affliction, was proclaimed his successor. We do not doubt Newcastle's sorrow, for in his own way he loved his brother and had divided his patrimony with him; but it is even more certain that the Chancellor acted as his watch-dog in front of the Treasury. For the Duke, though his timidity was a standing jest, could not bear that any one else should obtain the rich prize which he coveted and dreaded. And, in truth, if that was his view, no one could controvert it, for his power in the House of Commons was obvious and undeniable. The King seems to have made no trouble. He said that he had an open mind, and would be guided by the opinion of the Cabinet as to the nomination of their new chief. The suggestion shocked Hardwicke. 'To poll in a Cabinet Council for his first minister, which should only be settled in his closet, I could by no means digest.' So Hardwicke, with remarkable expedition, took care that the Closet, which was the term used to denote the King's personal apartment and so his personal authority, should pronounce in favour of Newcastle. But the Closet was guided by the Cabinet in spite of Hardwicke's scruples; and the Cabinet, a facile caucus, inspired by Hardwicke himself, represented to the King as its unanimous opinion that Newcastle should be their chief. Horace Walpole tells us that it was 'to the astonishment of all men.' To us it seems the only natural solution. Hardwicke had declared that a peer must be placed at the head of the Treasury. 'That peer must be somebody of great figure and credit in the nation, in whom the Whigs will have great confidence.' He was no doubt painting the figure to represent Newcastle. But who else could it be? Newcastle was the head of the Whigs, the master of Parliament, Secretary of State for a generation, and the brother of the late First Minister. The House of Commons, moreover, consisted mainly of his creatures. His nomination to the premiership was easy and simple enough. But a formidable difficulty at once presented itself. Who should lead the House of Commons? It was not that there was a dearth of capable men; on the contrary, there was a terrible embarrassment of riches; for there were Fox, Pitt, and Murray, all men of the first eminence in their lines. Murray at once let it be known that his views lay in another direction; in any case, he was a Scotsman, which was little recommendation, and suspected of being a Jacobite, which was less. But Fox was on the spot, and, though distracted with anxiety for his child Charles, who lay dangerously ill,[1] prompt, vigilant, and eager. Within a few hours of Pelham's death he had sent three humble messages of apology to Hardwicke, with whom he was on terms of bitter enmity, made energetic advances to Newcastle, and had called at Pitt's London house. Soon afterwards he was closeted with Lord Hartington. It was obvious that no considerations of delicacy would stand in his way. But there were strong prejudices against him. Hardwicke feared his success, for they had quarrelled mortally. He belonged, said the Chancellor, 'to a very narrow clique, many of them of the worst sort.' His claims rested on his abilities, but even more on the friendship of the Duke of Cumberland; perhaps, too, on a presumed pliability.

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[1] Holland House MSS.

Pitt was absent, and had the proverbial fate of the absent; he was not merely distant, but could not be moved. He had been nearly a year secluded in the country out of the atmosphere of London and politics. Horace Walpole describes him epigrammatically in a letter written on the stirring day after Pelham's death: 'Pitt has no health, no party, and has what in *this* case is allowed to operate, the King's negative.' On the other hand, the King had a prepossession for Fox; and the Cabinet, we are told, when it recommended Newcastle, unanimously named Fox as the proper person to be Secretary of State and manager of the House of Commons. What wonder then that Newcastle's choice fell on Fox, who at any rate could not be fobbed off by stories of the King's insurmountable repugnance and who was the favourite of the King's favourite son? The Chancellor sent his son-in-law, Lord Anson, to Fox with an olive-branch. Lady Yarmouth acted as a friendly means of communication between Fox and the King. Lord Hartington acted as the honest broker. Fox was given the management of the House of Commons, with the Secretaryship of State vacant by Newcastle's elevation. He was at once led by Hartington, like a votive lamb, to the Chancellor, with whom a reconciliation was concluded. Thence he was conducted to Newcastle, who received him, we need not doubt, with his customary effusion, probably with a kiss. All went well till the Secret Service money was mentioned. This Newcastle said he should distribute as his brother had done, without telling anybody anything. Then came the question of patronage. That also was to be reserved to Newcastle alone. Lastly, there was the list of nominees for ministerial boroughs at the approaching General Election. This Newcastle also declined to divulge. In the evening Newcastle sent for Hartington. He did not deny that he had broken his engagements, but simply declared that he would not stand by them. He 'confirmed not his promise but his breach of promise in these words: "Who desires Mr. Fox to be answerable for anybody but himself in the House of Commons?" I then,' continues Fox, 'was to take this great office on the footing of being quite a cypher, and being known to have been told so.'[1]

Newcastle had always intended this and nothing else. As Hardwicke judiciously wrote, two days before Newcastle saw Fox: 'If the power of the Treasury, the Secret Service and the House of Commons is once well settled in safe hands, the office of Secretary of State of the Southern province will carry very little efficient power along with it.' Fox was to be Secretary for the Southern province. But the Duke's plan of campaign had the radical defect of making the post of manager impossible. For the difference between the modern term of 'leadership' and the denomination of 'management' was no mere verbal distinction. The House of Commons had to be managed by acts of a kind more material than the eloquence of a chief, or the seductive hints of whips. The leader, in fact, combined the leadership with the office of Patronage Secretary. 'The House of Commons must have,' as Fox explained on a subsequent occasion, 'at least one man in it who shall be the organ of His Majesty's parliamentary wishes, and known to be able to help or hurt people with His Majesty.'[1] The leader would not know how to talk to his followers, when some might be hirelings and some free, without his knowing which were which. He would not be able to promise a borough or a place. He would be a mere speaking automaton with a wary old chief in concealment working the machine. Fox saw that he was cheated. He himself seems to have clung for a moment even to the shadow of office which Newcastle had proffered. But his friends insisted on his refusal. So on the next day or the next day but one, he wrote a curt letter, stating that the assurances conveyed to him through Lord Hartington had been entirely contradicted by Newcastle at their interview, and that he preferred to remain Secretary at War. 'I remain therefore,' he wrote to Marlborough, 'a little little man, which I think is better than a little great man.'[2] But he soon repented, or his friends did for him.[3]

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[1] Holland House MSS.

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[1] H. Fox to Argyll, Sept. 26, 1755 (H. H. MSS.).

[2] H. Fox to the Duke of Marlborough, March 22, 1754 (H. H. MSS.).

[3] Wingfield MSS. 224b in Hist. MSS.

Newcastle cared little for the charge of breach of faith. He had kept his patronage, and, as he thought, silenced Fox, who remained Secretary at War. In a hysterical condition he hurried to kiss hands for his new office. He flung himself at the King's feet, sobbing out 'God bless your Majesty! God preserve your Majesty!' embracing the royal knees with such howls of adoration that the lord-in-waiting had to beg the other courtiers to retire and not watch 'a great man in distress;' then, in the zeal of discretion, attempting to shut the door on the tittering crowd, he jammed the new Minister's foot till genuine roars of physical pain drowned the more artificial clamour.[1] Having recovered himself after this characteristic performance, Newcastle betook himself without delay to the choice of his heart, the man whom he had always longed for as a colleague, even at the time when he had been seeking a successor to Bedford, an obscure diplomatist, Sir Thomas Robinson. 'Had I,' he had written in September 1750, 'to chuse for the King, the public, and myself, I would prefer Sir Thomas Robinson to any man living. I know he knows more and would be more useful to the country and me than any other can be.' This opinion seems to have been confined to the Duke himself. Horace Walpole writing at the moment says:—'The German Sir Thomas Robinson was thought on for the Secretary's seals; but has just sense enough to be unwilling to accept them under so ridiculous an administration. This is the first act of the comedy.' But in the second act Sir Thomas's good sense was unequal even to this strain, and he accepted the post. Under what hallucination he laboured, or whether he was merely beguiled by the fawning caresses of Newcastle, it is difficult to say. The fact remains that he undertook to lead the House of Commons, seated between Pitt and Fox, whom he knew to be malcontents, and capable of anything. His own parliamentary powers were in the egg (for he had never spoken), and were never destined to be hatched. At the time of his appointment as Secretary of State he was Master of the Great Wardrobe, a congenial post which he was destined during the next year to resume. For in his new capacity he justified the anticipations of his enemies, and disturbed the equanimity of his friends. Newcastle himself had recommended the appointment to Pitt's benevolent consideration on the very ground that he could not excite the rivalry of existing orators. He 'had not those parliamentary talents which could give jealousy or in that light set him above the rest of the King's servants.' But the reality was far below these modest anticipations. Sir Thomas was not merely ineffectual and feeble, but would attempt on occasion agonising flights of eloquence. Posterity is spared the perusal of these, for Parliamentary history records no word of this unhappy leader. 'Sir Thomas,' says Lord Waldegrave, 'though a good Secretary of State, as far as the business of his office and that which related to foreign affairs, was ignorant even of the language of an House of Commons controversy; and when he played the orator, which he too frequently attempted, it was so exceedingly ridiculous that those who loved and esteemed him could not always preserve a friendly composure of countenance.' This partly arose from his appearance.

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[1] Walpole to Bentley, March 17, 1754.

He was a large unwieldy man, and would in debate put his arms straight out, which made George Selwyn compare him to a signpost.[1]

Such was Sir Thomas; who was to allay the warring elements, to appease the Titans and the Giants, to hold the scales between Fox and Pitt. Let us, while contemplating this grievous and pathetic spectacle, at least take comfort that we have arrived at the priceless narrative of Lord Waldegrave, a man not brilliant, but shrewd and honest, who guides us past the waspish partiality of Horace Walpole, the bitterness of Glover, and the corrupt cynicism of Dodington with a light which we feel to be the lamp of truth. Newcastle, delighted with the consent of Sir Thomas, and with the apparent acquiescence of Fox, hastened to complete his arrangements with the squalid instinct of a jobber. Fox was, he thought, muzzled; the formidable task remained of silencing Pitt. He could not satisfy Pitt directly, for that would imply overwhelming difficulties with the King, and perhaps with Fox; but he might give indirect satisfaction, and detach some of Pitt's little section. In this last attempt he succeeded. Pitt's friend Legge was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, the King only making the same condition that he had with regard to Pitt himself, that he was never to receive the new minister. It is said, indeed, by Horace Walpole that his mean appearance and uncouth dialect made him unsuitable for such audiences, and that he would have preferred to remain Treasurer of the Navy, the lucrative post which had so great a fascination for Bubb. George Grenville, one of the Cobham Cousinhood, succeeded Legge in this attractive office; George Lyttelton, another, became Cofferer, with his brother as Sub-Cofferer; 'it is a good £2200 per annum, all taxes deducted,'[1] writes George of his new post in the fulness of his heart; and, according to Horace Walpole, in the exuberance of his satisfaction with that office, he vouched for Pitt's acquiescence in the new arrangements. Newcastle himself presented these appointments to Pitt with a satisfaction not unalloyed with melancholy presentiments. 'The appointment of Mr. Legge was made,' he writes, 'with a view to please all our friends. We knew he was well with the old corps, we knew he was happy in your friendship, and in your good opinion and in that of your connection; *and you must allow me to say, that I never could have thought one moment of removing you, in the high light which you so justly stand, from the office you now possess to be Chancellor of the Exchequer with another person at the head of the Treasury.*'[2]

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[1] Colebrooke, i. 18.

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to explain that the italics are not the Duke's, but it seemed necessary to give emphasis to so daring a flight.

'These dispositions being thus made,' he continues, 'it was my first view to show you that regard in the person of your friends, which it was impossible to do in your own, to the degree which you might reasonably expect. The two first vacant offices, that of Treasurer of the Navy and Cofferer, were by my recommendation given to your two first friends, Mr. Grenville and Sir George Lyttelton,' etc. etc. 'Legge at the Exchequer, unsuitable for you, two of your friends as Cofferer and Treasurer'; these were the sedatives timidly launched to Pitt, gnashing his teeth at Bath over his own impotence and the desertion of his friends. So may a despairing traveller have attempted to assuage with a few casual comfits the hunger of a Bengal tiger crouching for a spring.

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[1] An Eighteenth Century Correspondence, 230.

[2] Newcastle to Pitt, April 2, 1754, Chatham Corr.

Pitt controlled himself. We have seen his reply[1] to Newcastle's shuffling apologies. He continued to write to Lyttelton, but with less cordiality. To George Grenville he wrote a tepid note of congratulation. To Temple, who had been omitted from the arrangements, he addressed himself more cordially, and sent the portrait for which he had been sitting to Hoare. It represents no formidable orator, but a simpering man of the world; yet, after the fashion of mankind, who secretly cherish the portraits least like themselves, Pitt commended the resemblance. But he took occasion to add a phrase which reveals the full bitterness of his heart. 'In this portrait,' he writes, 'I shall have had the honour to present myself before you in my very person; not only from the great likeness of the portrait, but, moreover, that I have no right to pretend to any other existence than that of a man en peinture.' The wrath pierces through the confused sentence like a sudden sting: it is not often indulged, but it cannot be wholly suppressed.

Soon afterwards (May 1754) Temple and his brother George paid Pitt a flying visit at Bath, where no doubt explanations were exchanged and plans concerted. For, putting Pitt on one side, the Minister knew little of human nature who could think that he would conciliate Temple by promoting his brother George.

In June 1754, Pitt at length left Bath and arrived in

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[1] Supra, p. 335.

London. He had now been fourteen months absent from the metropolis. In the meantime he had been chosen for Newcastle's borough of Aldborough at the General Election in the previous April, a somewhat embarrassing connection under existing circumstances; though embarrassments of this kind are apt to be less irksome in politics than they may appear. And Pitt wrote to thank the Duke in terms of Oriental submission. 'I thank you for writing to tell me of the great honour you have done me at Aldborough, for which seat I declined the offer of many others, being anxious to be known as your servant.' With whatever grimace Pitt may have written this, it strikes one as carrying the joke too far.[1]

But when he returned to London in June, he no longer affected to conceal his discontent. His complaints were obvious and well founded enough. He had not been consulted, but had only been informed. Nor was the information calculated to gratify him. He had been told at first that Fox, whom Bubb at this time calls Pitt's 'inveterate enemy,' had been offered the seals; then by the next post that Fox had refused them and that they had been accepted by Robinson. The excuse had then been tendered that Pitt's health would not allow him to accept an office of so much business and fatigue; to which he had replied that he himself should be the best judge of that. He ought at least to have been offered the Exchequer, which had been given to the underling Legge.[2] The King in any case should have been reconciled to him. When he saw the new minister Newcastle asked him his opinion of the arrangements. This Pitt at first refused to give, but on being pressed declared that 'your Grace may be surprised, but I think Mr. Fox should have been at the head of the House of Commons.' He met Fox. They had mutual explanations, and no doubt assurances of common vengeance to exchange. For Fox was as loud in complaint as Pitt. 'Nothing,' he wrote, 'can be more contemptuous than the usage I receive.'[1]

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[1] Add. MSS. 32733. Pitt to Newcastle, April 22, 1754.

[2] Bubb, 304.

Parliament had risen, so Pitt, after settling the arrears in his office, went back to the country. Early in September we find him at Astrop Wells. On October 2 he called on Newcastle with reference to some business in his office. Bubb's account of this interview is well known. When they had settled the business which had brought Pitt, the Duke wished to enter on affairs in North America, where things were looking black, and Washington, then a major, had been compelled to surrender to the French at Fort Necessity. 'Your Grace,' said Pitt, 'knows I have no capacity for such things,' and declined to discuss them.[2] Newcastle, who, the same day, wrote an account of the interview to Hardwicke, makes no mention of this incident. And yet it is too good, too Pitt-like, not to be true. We can reconcile the two statements by presuming that it was what an opening is to a game of chess, and that Pitt, having enjoyed his sarcasm, could not resist the appeal of military plans. 'I then acquainted him with what was designed for North America, and also with my Lord Granville's notions, which had not been followed. He talked up the affair of North America very highly—that it must be supported in all events and at all risks—that the Duke's scheme was a very good one as far as it went—that it might do something: that it did not go near far enough—that he could not help agreeing with my Lord Granville—that he was for doing both, sending the regiments and raising some thousand men in America—that we should do it once for all—that it was not to be done by troops from Europe—that mere France would be too strong for us—that we should have soon to countenance the Americans, &c.—that the Duke's proposals for artillery, &c., were infinitely too short. This discourse, joined with Lord Anson's opinion, has made me suspend at least the stopping the orders for the raising two regiments, &c., and for providing all the artillery promised by the Duke.'[1]

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[1] Aug. 29, 1754. H. H. MSS.

[2] Bubb, 317.

What a scene of confusion! Here are three stages revealed: the orders, the stopping the orders, the suspending the stopping the orders! Pitt, it is evident, though beginning with a refusal, ended by speaking with authority.

Hardwicke, however, who had made a merit to Pitt of having sustained his claim to be Secretary, waxed suspicious on receiving Newcastle's letter. 'I am glad,' he replies, 'your Grace has talked to Mr. Pitt upon these measures. As he expressed himself so zealously and sanguinely for them, I hope he will support them in Parliament, and I dare say your Grace did not omit the opportunity of pressing that upon him. There is something remarkable in that gentleman's taking a measure of the Duke's so strongly to heart, and arguing even to carry it further. I think that sett used to be against warlike measures.'[2]

[1] Newcastle to Hardwicke, Oct. 2, 1754. Add. MSS. 32737.

[2] Hardwicke to Newcastle, Oct. 3, 1754. Add. MSS. 32737.

Suspicion tainted every political breeze. The vigilant celibates in Cranford did not keep a closer watch on their neighbours' proceedings than did the public men of those days on each other. The mere fact of Pitt's commending a project of Cumberland, his former enemy, at once implied to Hardwicke that he was in harmony and understanding with Fox, Cumberland's right-hand man. And indeed Bubb assures us that this was the case. Fox and Pitt were agreed as to the division of the spoils, when spoils there should be. Fox was to be head of the Treasury and Pitt Secretary of State; 'but neither will assist the other.'

All this came to nothing, and therefore need not detain us now; for Pitt was occupied with something far more vital to him than Fox, or Newcastle, or the distant echoes of American warfare. He had come up from Wotton, the residence of George Grenville, where in the last days of September he had plighted his troth to Lady Hester Grenville, the sister of the Grenvilles, and he was now hurrying back to join her at Stowe. The engagement was in some respects remarkable. Pitt was now forty-six and Lady Hester was thirty-three. When Pitt first went to Stowe in 1735 she was fourteen, and in the nineteen years that had elapsed they must have seen each other constantly. How was it then that the cripple of forty-six suddenly flung away his crutches to throw himself at the feet of this mature young lady? It seems inexplicable, but love affairs are often inexplicable. And we know little or nothing of Pitt's loves. Except the childish passage at Besançon, there is only the statement of Horace Walpole, a spiteful gossip if ever there was one, that Lady Archibald Hamilton had lost the affections of Frederick Prince of Wales by giving him Pitt as a rival.[1] This lacks confirmation and even probability. Were it true, it might be a clue to phases of Pitt's connection with Leicester House. He seems, too, as we have seen in a letter of Lyttelton's, to have had a tenderness for Lyttelton's sister Molly. Then there was another Molly, Molly West, with whom, it is said, he had been in love, the sister of his friend Gilbert, who afterwards married Admiral Hood, Lord Bridport. Want of means, we are told, prevented their union. But the authority for this is unknown to us.[2]

This much at least is certain, that no man ever had a nobler or more devoted wife. She survived him to witness the glories and almost the death of her second son, dying in April 1803. At Orwell there is a picture of her by Gainsborough, painted in 1747, dressed in white with jewels, with a pleasant rather than a beautiful face. There is another portrait at Chevening painted in 1750, which represents her with auburn hair, a long upper lip, and a nose slightly turned up; comely and intelligent, but no more. Mrs. Montagu rather confirms this impression: 'I believe Lady Hester Grenville is very good-humoured, which is the principal article in the happiness of the Marriage State. Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover,'[3] and so forth; from which we may infer that Lady Hester was not at any rate a reigning toast. Her appearances are rare but full of tenderness; she watched over her husband with exquisite devotion; furthering and anticipating his wishes, which were often fanciful and extravagant; shielding his moments of nervous prostration with the wings of an angel. On her rested often, if not always, the care of his affairs, often, if not always, disordered, and all the burdens of household management. For many months she was his sole channel of communication with the outer world. The wives of statesmen are not invariably successful, though they are generally devoted; but none was ever more absorbed in her high but harassing duty. In all the bitterness of that bitter time, when her husband seemed surrounded by implacable enmities, no one found a word to say against her. Pitt's choice seems to have been as wise as it was deliberate.

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[1] Orford, i. 76.

[2] An Eighteenth Century Correspondence, p. 154.

[3] Mrs. Montagu's Letters, iii. 273.

Camelford, from whom the worst interpretation can always be obtained, says: ‘His marriage was unexpected. He was no longer young, and his infirmities made him older than his years, when, upon a visit to Mr. Grenville at Wotton, Lady Hester made an impression upon him that was the more extraordinary as she was by no means new to him. The first hints he gave of his intentions were eagerly seized by her, saying she should be unworthy the honour he proposed to her if she could hesitate a moment in accepting it. With a very common understanding and totally devoid of tenderness, or of any feeling but pride and ambition, she contrived to make herself a good wife to him by a devotion and attachment that knew no bounds. She lived only in his glory, and that vanity absorbed every other idea of her mind. She was his nurse, his flatterer, his housekeeper and steward, and, though her talent was by no means economy, yet she could submit to any privation that would gratify his wants or his caprices.

If he loved anyone it must be her who had no love but for him, or rather for his reputation. Yet I saw no sacrifices on his part for her ease and quiet or to the essential comforts of her life.'

As to Lady Hester's having a 'very common understanding' and being 'totally devoid of tenderness' we need not rest on tradition, though that is all the other way; for the superiority of her understanding and her tenderness are amply proved by the admirable letters published from the Pretyman Papers by Lord Ashbourne; and her devotion to her husband is attested by Camelford himself. How he became acquainted with the details of courtship, usually mysterious enough, and in those days more veiled than in these, we need not trouble to inquire. When it took place Pitt was taking time which he could ill spare to write letters of anxious and affectionate solicitude to Camelford at Cambridge, and receiving in return the most unbounded assurances of grateful devotion.

Pitt's love letters, alas! survive; the treasures of his wife, but the despair of posterity. That a great genius presumably in love should send such stilted, pompous, artificial documents as tokens of his passion to the object of his affections is one of the mysteries of brain and heart. They are as wretched in their way as the letters of Burns to Clarinda, and shall not be quoted here.

Having paid his betrothed a flying visit at Stowe, the blithe bridegroom had as usual to proceed to Bath, where he remained a fortnight inditing these execrable epistles of rhetorical affection.

CHAPTER XVII.

1754. ON November 14, the very day of the opening of Parliament, Pitt brought forward a bill for the relief of the Chelsea Pensioners, who, from receiving their pensions a year in arrear, fell inextricably into the hands of usurers. He was in haste to perform this useful duty, for on November 16 he was married by special licence to Lady Hester at Argyll Buildings, Dr. Ayscough officiating; and Solomon and Esther, as Lady Townshend called them, thence departed for the honeymoon to West's house of Wickham in Kent. That interval of seclusion did not last long, but it would seem to have effected a striking transformation. The marriage marks a new ascent in Pitt's career; love seemed to have transformed him; always powerful and eloquent, he became sublime. Into his former qualities there had passed an inspiration kindred to the divine passion which makes the poet. The timid warblers of the grove, as he was afterwards to call them, the politicians who sought quiet lives and safe places, the arch-jobber himself who had for years deluded him, were in an instant to realise that a new terror was added to life. For on November 25 he was once more in the House of Commons. At this time, just before or just after the meeting of Parliament, he had come to open words with Newcastle. The Duke had offered the usual palliatives. 'Fewer words, if you please, my Lord,' replied Pitt contemptuously, 'for your words have long lost all weight with me.' Fox had said much the same to Newcastle in March. The new Minister had therefore been grossly insulted by the two first men in the House of Commons. He must have felt that there were menacing symptoms in the political horizon. It is strange, therefore, to find Walpole writing that, as 'Newcastle had secured by employments almost every material speaker in Parliament,' it was hoped that the session might pass in settling election petitions.[1]

It seems incredible that the Duke can have so flattered himself. But no doubt he relied on two main considerations. One was that, though official discipline was then incomparably more lax than now, it was scarcely possible for Pitt or Fox to mean mischief so long as they kept their places, and these they had not resigned. The other was this. The General Election had just been conducted under his auspices, and had returned a House of Commons devoted to himself. Indeed in all England there were only forty-two contests. In some Continental countries a general election always returns a ministerial majority; there are mysteries connected with the proceeding of which only ministers have the key. This to some extent was the case in England at this period; and no Secretary of the Treasury, no Martin or Robinson, understood his particular business better than Newcastle. But whatever his illusions, they were soon destined to be disturbed, for on November 25 Pitt opened fire on him. Of that famous scene and outburst we are fortunate enough to possess two brilliant descriptions: one by Horace Walpole, and one, even more graphic, which has the additional value of being written by Pitt's rival, Henry Fox. Fox, writing in a white heat of generous admiration, describes it summarily as 'the finest speech that ever Pitt spoke, and perhaps the most remarkable.' This last epithet was probably due to the fact that the speech was apparently made on the spur of the moment. The occasion was one of those election petitions on which the Duke had relied as a sedative and a pastime for his faithful Commons. Wilkes, the pleasant, worthless demagogue, who was afterwards to cause so much trouble, had petitioned against the return of Delaval, the sitting member for Berwick. Delaval had defended his seat in a speech full of wit and buffoonery, which kept the House in a roar of laughter; much the same speech, one would guess, that Pitt himself had delivered on the proceedings at his own election for Seaford when those were attacked. But to-day he was in a different mood, and, as the debate proceeded, came down from the gallery where he was seated, and intervened with a frown. He was 'astonished to hear this merriment when such a matter was concerned. Was the dignity of the House on so sure a foundation that we could afford to shake it with scoffs?' In an instant the House was cowed into silence, like schoolboys found in fault by their master. You could have heard a pin drop as he continued.

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[1] Orford, i. 406-7.

'Had it not, on the contrary, been diminishing for years, till now we were brought to the very brink of a precipice where, if ever, a stand must be made? Were we ourselves within the House to try and lessen that dignity when such attacks were made upon it from without that it was almost lost? On the contrary, it wanted support, for it was scarcely possible to recover it.' He appealed to the Speaker (Onslow) with profuse compliments, for the Speaker only could restore it—yet scarcely even he. Then he eloquently adjured all Whigs to rally and unite in defence of their liberties, which were attacked, nay, dying, 'unless,' he passionately added, 'you will degenerate into a little assembly serving no other purpose than to register the arbitrary edicts of *one* too-powerful *subject;*' laying an emphasis on the words 'one' and 'subject' that might well send a shudder to the soul of Newcastle, when the echo should reach him. He ended by a recapitulation as to 'our being likely to become an appendix to—I know not what: I have no name for it.' 'All,' adds Fox, 'whether pleased or displeased, declare this speech to be the finest that ever was made.'[1] The effect of this sudden menace in the midst of the Duke's comfortable arrangements to appease and silence everybody, was appalling. It came with the shattering effect of a shell, and a shell falling in some quiet picnic. The Ministers were in consternation; every member sat confounded. Murray, pale and miserable, shrunk his head in silence. Wilkes used to narrate his dread, as he heard the awful tone of Pitt's exordium, lest the thunder that he saw was gathering should fall on him. Never, he said, when at Westminster School had he felt greater terror when summoned for a flogging, never when let off a greater relief than on this occasion; terror when uncertain where the bolt would fall, relief when he found it was destined for another.[2] Fox himself only came in as Pitt was finishing, just in time to witness the devastation which had been caused. Legge, on the part of the Government, had to rise and humbly deprecate the wrath of the orator.

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[1] Fox to Hartington, Nov. 26, 1754, in Waldegrave, p. 146. Orford, i. 408. Cf. Calcraft to Digby, Nov. 26, 1754, in Wingfield MSS.

[2] Butler's Rem. i. 144.

Pitt allowed no respite. On the same evening a discussion arose as to the dates on which the various petitions would be taken. That relating to Reading was fixed for a particular day, and that for Colchester on a day soon afterwards. Pitt moved the postponement of the Colchester petition; as the Reading one would take time, and concerned a noble lord, Lord Fane, for whom he had a particular regard. A malignant fate here tempted the new Secretary of State to a needless and unhappy intervention. He declared that the Reading petition would be a short case, and, so far as concerned the sitting member, a poor case; that Lord Fane had only a majority of one.

This gave Pitt his opportunity, and he soundly trounced the unfortunate Minister. What did Sir Thomas know about it? It was ignorant presumption to lay down the law about a case which had not been heard. If this was the method of the Minister, there would be short work with elections. He himself had little thought to see so melancholy a day as this, but he was not to be taught his duty by Sir Thomas or any one else. Sir Thomas replied, 'with pomp, confusion, and warmth,' to deprecate the misleading effects of mere eloquence. He hoped that words would not be allowed more than their due weight. For his own part, he was performing the duties of an office which he had never desired. Pitt in his rejoinder affected to believe this last statement, with the unkind commentary that if anybody else had wished for the post, Sir Thomas would not have had it. Then, artfully cooling down, he showed that he was only aiming at Newcastle, for he professed the highest respect for Sir Thomas with this cruel, backhand blow at the Duke, 'that he thought him, Sir Thomas, as able as any man that had of late years filled that office, or was likely to fill it.' Fox could no longer resist joining in the sport of baiting his hapless leader. He also could only explain and excuse Sir Thomas's pronouncing hastily and summarily on a case which he had not heard by his long residence abroad, and by his consequent and total inexperience of parliamentary matters.

It was clear that neither of the formidable lieutenants was in the least appeased, or likely to contribute to the tranquillity of the session. Still it was also clear that the members of the House were loyal to Newcastle and his deputy, and that they were not moved from their allegiance by the oratory to which they had listened. But when the display was over, the frightened ministerialists gathered into small groups whispering their terrors to each other. Pitt's fury breaking out at this moment might be due, thought Fox, in some measure to accident. 'But break out I knew it would. And the Duke of Newcastle may thank himself for the violence of it (he) having . . . . owned to Pitt that he had acquainted the King with part of their last conversation; adding, like an idiot, "to do you good, to do you good," and that he had not mentioned that part which could do him harm.'[1] We do not know what is the interview to which this refers; it can hardly be that which occurred at the beginning of October in which Pitt had said, 'Your Grace, I suppose, knows that I have no capacity for such things.' So we are at a loss to know the immediate cause of Pitt's outbreak, though no divination is required to know that ever since Pelham's death he had been explosive.

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[1] Waldegrave, 149–50

Nothing can better illustrate the extraordinary power which Newcastle wielded in the House of Commons than the dumb terrified fidelity of the great majority who clung to his knees in spite of the attacks of Pitt and Fox. Hapless majority! They had neither voice nor faith; they despised almost equally their nominal chief Robinson, and their real chief Newcastle; so they huddled together for warmth and sympathy. And this was a House of Commons produced by a general election carried on under the auspices of a consummate manipulator and by long years of cozening, patronage, and corruption. The success had been complete, a devoted and passive majority had been returned, and this was the result. It was a strange and instructive spectacle. This docile flock was shepherdless, it was not thought to need any superintendence, it had only to receive its instructions from Newcastle through the channel of some such agent as Robinson. What Newcastle thought well to give, it was prepared gladly to take. Could Minister want more? Yet, before the session was a fortnight old, Newcastle was to learn, but not completely, the futility of such a scheme of government. He had promised the King that the new House of Commons would need no leader, that indeed the position of leader of the House of Commons was both dangerous in power and superfluous in practice. He was yet to learn that there was something more formidable; a ship without captain or helmsman, and two loose cannon banging about at large.

For, two days after the annihilation of Robinson, Pitt again took the field, this time against Murray, the most formidable antagonist that he ever had to face after the resignation of Walpole. It was on the vote for the army. Barrington and Nugent had made fulsome speeches, dwelling on the popularity of the King and the Ministry, declaring, indeed, that there were no Jacobites in England. People, said Nugent, sometimes reared those whom they thought would be Jacobites, but who turned out very differently. So had he seen in his rural retirement a hen, which had hatched duck's eggs, watch with apprehension her nurslings betake themselves to the water. Pitt rose and declared with solemn pleasantry that this image had greatly struck him, 'for, sir, I know of such a hen.' The hen, it appeared, was the University of Oxford. This, we think, in its demure unexpectedness, is the best stroke of humour in all his speeches. But he begged the House not to be sure that all she hatched would ever entirely forget what she had taught them. Then followed an innuendo at old Horace Walpole which is immaterial and obscure. Sir Roger Newdigate, whose name is still cherished by budding poets, rose, as member for the University, to make a meek defence. Pitt rose again, and told 'inimitably' the story of a recent adventure at Oxford. He was with a party at the Angel Inn, one of whom was asked to sing 'God save Great George our King' (one can hardly imagine that it was Pitt who called for this). The chorus was re-echoed by undergraduates outside who had been attracted by the song, 'but with additions of the rankest treason.' Then walking down the High Street he examined a print in a shop window of a young Highlander in a blue ribbon, and was shocked to read the motto *Hunc saltem everso Juvenem.* This Latin prayer was a flagrant proof of the disloyalty of that learned body. ‘In both speeches every word was *Murray;* yet so managed that neither he nor anybody else could or did take public notice of it, or in any degree reprehend him. I,’ it is Henry Fox who speaks, ‘sate next Murray, *who suffered for an hour.*’[1] Two episodes seem to attach themselves to this terrible onslaught. One is the famous and dramatic menace. Fixing his eyes on Murray the orator paused and proceeded: ‘I must now address a few words to Mr. Solicitor.—They shall be few, but they shall be daggers.’ Murray's agitation was now visible. ‘Judge Festus trembles,’ thundered Pitt; ‘well, he shall hear me some other day,’ and sat down.[2] Murray could not muster a reply. We may be sure that he then mentally resolved that, whether Festus or not, he would be a Judge as soon as possible. Yet Granville had embraced him that very day and bid him pluck up resolution. The other episode is this. Foote went with Murphy (afterwards Editor of the ‘Test’) to hear Pitt, who happened to be putting forth his full powers in an attack on Murray. ‘Shall we go home now?’ asked Murphy at last. ‘No,’ replied Foote, ‘let us wait till he has made the little man vanish entirely.’[3]

The plan of ignoring the House of Commons and keeping all power in a junto of two or three, or even one, was already breaking down. ‘It is the universal opinion,’ writes

[1] Fox to Hartington, Nov. 28, 1754, in Waldegrave, p. 150. Orford, i. 142.

[2] Butler's Reminiscences, i. 145.

[3] Table Talk of S. Rogers, p. 100.

Fox, in the same letter as that in which he describes Pitt's onslaught on Murray, 'that business cannot go on as things are now, and that offers will be made to Pitt or me. On this subject Pitt was with me two hours yesterday morning. A difficult conversation.' Nov. 27, 1754. Difficult indeed, for both parties fenced with each other, and neither was sincere. Pitt had long distrusted Fox and his connection with Cumberland. We have seen that in March he was writing confidentially that he wished 'to see as little power in Fox's hand as possible,' and again in the same letter, 'Fox is too odious to last for ever.' On the other hand, Fox, who was genial but ignoble, was determined to take the best place that offered, with a secret leaning to the lucrative possibilities of Pitt's office. Fox was not in error as to the offers. He wrote on November 28, and on November 29 Newcastle was beginning to seek assistance. On that morning the King sent for Fox and treated him with friendly confidence. It then appeared that the royal leaning towards Fox was caused by the King's having found out that Frederick Prince of Wales had made overtures to Fox, who had rejected them, but had not divulged them for the purpose of paying court to the King.[1]

The object of the Court was to separate Fox and Pitt. This last, doubtful and suspicious, had at first assured the Chancellor and Newcastle that he would not league with Fox. This was probably the secret of the Minister's confidence. But when Pitt realised that the Duke was trading on the division between his two formidable auxiliaries he sought, or appeared to seek, an honest and hearty co-operation with his rival.[2]

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[1] Orford, i. 417.

[2] Ib. 418.

'Could you bear to act under Fox?' Hardwicke had asked him, and 'Leave out *under*; it will never be a word between us: Mr. Fox and I shall never quarrel,' had been the reply.

Alas! for the loves of statesmen, often ardent and always precarious. The vague bait was no sooner dangled before Fox than he began to eye it with avidity and to contemplate the abandonment of Pitt. He sought the advice of two friends, Cumberland and Marlborough. The last advised him to ask for admission to the Cabinet and to be satisfied with that advantage. Cumberland dissuaded him, as it would seem, from parting company with Pitt, and used these remarkable words: 'I don't know him, but by what you tell me, Pitt is what is scarce—he is a man.' But at last both dukes concurred in Marlborough's advice, with the proviso that Fox should make it a condition that he was not to oppose Pitt; a singular reservation when it is remembered that his help was only sought against Pitt, as he was soon made distinctly to understand. Fox apparently took Pitt into his confidence, and they exchanged cordial notes. He submitted to Pitt his letter to the King, and Pitt approved it with some omissions. Nothing must be said, he declared, which remotely implied that he would do the least thing to keep his place.[1] So Fox wrote to say that, understanding the King was determined to have no leader in the House of Commons, but wished to have him take a forward and spirited part on behalf of the Ministry, he desired some mark of his Majesty's favour to show that he enjoyed his Majesty's confidence. Waldegrave, who conducted the negotiation, was given to understand that the distinction aimed at was a seat in the Cabinet. He was further told that Fox would never accept Pitt's rich place, which the King had said was destined for him in the event of Pitt's dismissal, lest it be said that he was answering Pitt for money. So the stipulation about not opposing Pitt was already out of his contemplation. The negotiations extended over months. The King had first seen Fox on November 29, 1754, but did not signify to Fox his admission to the Cabinet till April 26, 1755, two days before his Majesty left for Hanover. Fox was also admitted to the Council of Regency during the King's absence.

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[1] See Pitt's obscure note in Chatham Corresp. i. 130, and the interpretation in Orford, i. 419.

During these months of negotiation his opposition to the Ministry ceased, and Pitt was left alone. But he communicated constantly and secretly with Pitt as to the offers made. When he had closed with them, without waiting for the cock to crow, he forswore Pitt.[1] He was no doubt made to understand distinctly, as he must always have known, that it was the condition of his elevation. This treachery cost him dear; for Pitt, who seems to have been at once apprised of the desertion, probably by a Minister whose interest it was to keep the two apart, never forgave it. Nor could a man much less irritably and jealously proud have done otherwise. So much for the question of honour. As to the question of policy it is clear that a real union between Pitt and himself would have been irresistible. But Fox at the first temptation forsook this honourable alliance, and forsook it for a feather, as the lure was justly described.

It should be mentioned that this account of Fox's behaviour is founded on the narrative of Horace Walpole, and that Waldegrave, who is far more trustworthy, says that 'Fox during the whole negotiation behaved like a man of sense and a man of honour.' But this only regards his negotiation with Newcastle, in which Waldegrave acted as the channel. Walpole, on the other hand, was notoriously partial to Fox, and in his confidence, so that his statement may be taken as accurate. In no other way, indeed, can the breach between the two statesmen be adequately explained. On April 26 they are on the most confidential footing. On May 9 there is a public rupture. Fox, indeed, attributes this sudden breach to Pitt's wish to be well at Leicester House; but then Fox had to find an ostensible reason, as he did not know that Pitt was aware of his desertion.

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[1] Orford, i. 420.

Apr 27, 1755. The day after the admission of Fox to the Cabinet, Newcastle despatched old Horace Walpole to Pitt to see if they could not come to terms. Old Horace, who has suffered from the constant malignity of his nephew, but who appears to have been a laborious and public-spirited man, with a not uncommon itch for a coronet, undertook the commission with alacrity; but found, as all did who attempted to negotiate for Newcastle, that his powers were far from ample, and shrunk from the moment that they were given. It is probable that these overtures were only made in consequence of some secret agreement between Fox and Pitt that Pitt's claims should be pushed; for it is otherwise inexplicable that they should have been made simultaneously with the capture of Fox, and that Newcastle on the slenderest grounds should at once have withdrawn the commission. The hypothesis of a sham negotiation, entered upon to keep to the letter of some understanding arrived at through Fox, is highly congenial to the character of Newcastle; nor is it likely that Fox can have joined the Government, when in the closest communication with Pitt, without some such stipulation.

Whatever the nature of the overture may have been, Pitt received Walpole, with whom he was on cordial terms, not unfavourably. He stipulated that he should be admitted to the Cabinet, but not, it would appear, immediately (for the King was going abroad next day); and that in case of a vacancy he should be promised the seals of Secretary of State. No one could deem these conditions excessive, and Walpole approved them. But Newcastle would have none of them, and soundly rated his emissary. It is clear that the negotiation was illusory and unreal; for what less terms could Newcastle have expected Pitt to demand?[1]

May 9, 1755.

A fortnight afterwards Pitt went to Lord Hillsborough's, where he met Fox. When Fox had gone he declared that all was at an end between Fox and himself; that the ground was altered; Fox was a Regent and a Cabinet Minister, and he was left isolated. Fox returned, and Pitt, in great heat, repeated what he had said with even more violence. He would not accept the seals from Fox (this seems to confirm our hypothesis as to the sham negotiation through Walpole), for that would be to acknowledge a superiority and an obligation. 'What, then,' said Fox, 'would put us on an equality?' 'A winter in the Cabinet and a summer's Regency,' replied Pitt, in allusion to what Fox had accepted.

Next day Hillsborough expostulated with Pitt, who, however, remained unmoved, and begged him to convey as a message to Fox that all connection between them was at an end. Pitt added that though he esteemed Fox he wished to have no further conversation on this subject. In spite of this, during the next few days they had a further conference at Holland House, but with no better result.[1]

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[1] Coxe's Lord Walpole, ii. 406.

On this second occasion (May 12, 1755) Pitt formally declared their connection at an end. Fox asked if Pitt suspected him of ill faith in the recent negotiations. Pitt, on his honour, held him blameless. 'Then,' asked Fox, 'are our lines incompatible?' 'Not incompatible, but convergent,' a word that Fox professed not to understand. In the future it was possible they might act together, not now. On this or some proximate occasion, Pitt blurted out what was at least one cause of offence. 'Here is the Duke of Cumberland King and you his minister.' The Duke, like Fox himself, was only an ordinary member of the Council of Regency, so that Pitt's taunt was absurd. But Pitt was looking to the young court of Leicester House which detested and distrusted Cumberland; hence this outburst of jealousy and wrath. Pitt indeed, the day before, had seen the Princess of Wales; who, it was presumed, had insisted on an open and immediate rupture with Fox as the price of her support. But beneath all there was we think, in spite of all professions, undying suspicion of Fox's rectitude in the recent negotiation with Newcastle.[2]

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[1] Bubb, 319–21. Orford, ii. 37.

[2] The accession of Fox to the Cabinet is beset with small difficulties of chronology. Horace Walpole in his Memoirs (i. 147) tells us that the King sent for Fox on November 29, 1754, and in a letter of January 9, 1755, announces that Fox had been admitted to the Cabinet. Yet we have Fox's own letter to Pitt of April 26, 1755, announcing that the King that afternoon had signified to him his admission to the Cabinet. (Chatham Corresp. i. 132). It is evident that Horace Walpole believed, prematurely, that the matter was settled early in January. Strangely enough our surest authority in all these transactions, except Waldegrave, who is vague and dateless, is the corrupt and perfidious Bubb.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IT was soon clear to Newcastle that Fox after all might not suffice, and that Pitt must be again approached. The King, then in Hanover and beyond Newcastle's control, was negotiating new treaties of subsidy on behalf of his German dominions; one with Hesse-Cassel for a contingent of 12,000 men to act in defence of Hanover or Great Britain, the other with Russia for an army of 40,000 men for the defence of Hanover. It was terrible for the Duke to contemplate what Pitt might say and do with regard to such unpopular and indefensible instruments. Moreover, Pitt was now supported by the court, every day more and more important, of Leicester House. It was probably Hardwicke, who as the moving brain of the Cabinet saw the vital importance of securing Pitt, and who was, we think, sincerely favourable to Pitt's pretensions, if only from hatred of Fox, who suggested these negotiations; and it was his son Charles Yorke who entered upon them. Yorke was to act as a skirmisher, to get in touch with Pitt, and to report on the temper in which he found him. They met on July 6 (1755), and talked over the abortive conference with Walpole. Pitt declared that he had then waived the immediate bestowal of the Secretaryship of State, but had asked not merely that Newcastle should speak on his behalf before the King left for Hanover, and urge that he was the proper person to lead the debates in the House of Commons; but that Lady Yarmouth should also be interested in his cause, so that she might use her influence with the King during their stay abroad.

Of Newcastle himself he spoke with supreme disdain. It was a waste of time to bring him assurances of friendship and confidence from Newcastle. All that was over. He would never owe Newcastle a favour, he would accept nothing as an obligation to Newcastle. This is not in Yorke's account, because probably it would be shown to Newcastle. But it comes authentically enough from Pitt's brother-in-law, James Grenville, to Bubb. If Newcastle were really in earnest, he would say that he could listen to no proposition but this: 'This is our policy; and the post of Secretary of State, in which you shall support it, is destined for you.'

Yorke reported to his father, and Hardwicke saw Pitt on August 8 (1755), with power to offer a seat in the Cabinet. After compliments, to use Eastern language, which were usually the preface of such interviews, in which both parties assured each other of high mutual esteem, which Pitt went so far on this occasion as to declare for Newcastle, in strange contrast with his language to Yorke, they came at once to the point. Before he could take what was required, 'a clear, active, and cordial part in support of the King's measures in the House of Commons,' Pitt desired to know what those measures might be. Hardwicke at once specified them. ''Twas all open and above board; the support of the maritime and American war, in which we were going to be engaged, and the defence of the King's German dominions, if attacked on account of the English cause. The maritime and American war he came roundly into, tho' very orderly, and allowed the principle and obligation of honour and justice as to the other, but argued strongly as to the practicability of it. That subsidiary treaties would not go down; the nation could not hear' (obviously 'bear') them. That they were a connection and a chain, and would end in a general plan for the Continent which the country would (obviously 'could') not possibly support.' Then he went into financial considerations. The maritime and American war would alone add two millions a year to the National Debt, which could not bear an addition of one million. He would treat Hanover like any other foreign dependency of the British Crown; the worst that could happen was that it should be occupied by the enemy for a time and restored at a peace, and that then compensation might be given to the King. As to the subsidies, Hessian and Russian, he asked questions but did not commit himself. But he inquired, with peculiar emphasis, what others, such as Fox, Legge, Lee, and Egmont, thought of them. At last he said he must consult his friends, one of whom, Legge, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was about to visit. But why, asked Hardwicke, should he not see Newcastle himself? 'With all my heart, if he would see me,' replied Pitt. To the offer of a seat in the Cabinet he said neither yea nor nay, but he was, thought Hardwicke, gratified by the overture.[1]

One cannot but note the strange contrast between Pitt's language about Newcastle to Hardwicke and that which he had used to Yorke. 'He expressed great regard for your Grace and me.' But this was the base coinage in political use at that time, and Pitt had by this time become a master of dissimulation. Fox hated Newcastle to the full as much as did Pitt. In truth, every one seems to have secretly hated or despised him, or both; a melancholy reward for an industrious ministerial existence. But so great was his political influence that scarce any one could afford to say so.

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[1] Thackeray gives a different account of this interview and of that with Charles Yorke, we know not whence derived. The account in the text is that of Charles Yorke and Hardwicke themselves (Harris, iii. 29–34) and in part Bubb, on the authority of James Grenville (p. 340).

One Minister was now, however, to display a rare courage, and to oppose both the King and his Minister on a critical point. In the middle of August, after the conversation with Hardwicke, the treaty of subsidy with Hesse-Cassel arrived for the necessary confirmations. When it came before Legge as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he, no doubt with the connivance of Pitt, flatly refused his signature. Newcastle had always distrusted Legge, as, indeed, he distrusted everybody, and had given him the seals of the Exchequer with great reluctance. He was now aghast. War was imminent; the King would soon return with his pockets full of odious treaties of subsidy; Fox was still a malcontent; Legge was in open revolt; it was evident that he must face the formidable interview with Pitt. So he expressed the necessary wish, though one may guess his reluctance, and Pitt saw the Duke on September 2 (1755) for two hours and a half. The record of this interview is contained in a long letter from Newcastle to Hardwicke,[1] couched in the quavering notes of a distracted Minister. It begins with a wail of despair, the reluctant acknowledgment of the paramount importance of Pitt. 'I never sat down to write to your lordship with more melancholy apprehensions for the Publick than at present. I see nothing but confusion and it is beyond me to point out a remedy.'

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[1] Newcastle to Hardwicke, Sept. 3, 1755. Add. MSS. 32858. See too Orford, ii. 40.

This was the result of Pitt's verbal refusal to join him, made by a Minister who held the great mass of the House of Commons in the hollow of his hand, who clung to office as to life, and yet, though he knew Pitt was indispensable to its retention, would not once more, as in 1746, face his Sovereign and say so. Nothing can better illustrate the trembling plank on which the Duke was content to walk, wavering and helpless, depending only on Hardwicke's counsel and his own jobs. He did not dare face the King, he was bullied by the disorderly chiefs in the House of Commons, and he was always chaffering, but always afraid. So he and his like are satisfied to bear the yoke for the semblance of power.

All began smoothly between Pitt and the Duke, all was apparently open, friendly, and civil; but when Newcastle referred to the conversation with Hardwicke, he was taken aback by finding that Pitt declared that nothing had passed that was material. He thus compelled Newcastle to recapitulate the points of policy, no doubt for purposes of comparison.

So the Duke had to state that the eve of the King's departure had been too troubled to lay Pitt's claim before his Majesty; for an address against the journey had been threatened in the House of Commons and actually proposed in the House of Lords. But that when alarming events had happened in America, Hardwicke and he had represented to the King the urgent necessity of forming a system in the House of Commons, which means, it may be presumed, abandoning the plan of conducting the House without a leader, and of enlisting Pitt as an active Minister there. That thereupon the King had graciously expressed his readiness to admit Pitt to his Cabinet. Pitt received this offer coolly, and proceeded at once to larger issues.

As to the King's voyage he spoke with unsparing candour. The King had nearly ruined himself by his unpardonable departure to Hanover at such a crisis. He should only have been allowed to go there over the dead bodies of his people. 'A King abroad at this time, without one man about him that has an English heart, and only returning to bring home a packet of subsidies.'

Of course, he proceeded to say with scarcely disguised sarcasm, the King's countenance was more to him than any other consideration. But if it was expected that he should take an active and efficient part in Parliament he must observe that a mere summons to the Cabinet would not be sufficient. In his present office he could silently acquiesce in ministerial measures. But activity could only be exercised in a responsible situation.

Then he took a line which was clear, bold, and statesmanlike. The whole machinery of the House of Commons was, he said, paralysed by the plan of leaving it without a responsible Minister. That plan must be abandoned. The House could not perform its proper functions without a responsible Minister, even though a subordinate one, who should have access to the Sovereign and to the royal confidence. For that purpose the leader or agent must have a responsible office of *advice* as well as of *execution*. 'That was the distinction he made throughout his whole conversation. He would support the measures which he himself had advised, but would not like a lawyer talk from a brief. That it was better plainly to tell me so at first.'

This surely was no inordinate claim from indisputably the first member of the House of Commons, whom the King had kept at bay for so many years, and to keep whom still in subjection every possible manœuvre, childish or cunning, was being adopted. 'Why,' said he bluntly to Newcastle, 'cannot you bring yourself to part with some of your sole power?' This of course produced voluble asseverations from the Duke. Sole power! What an idea! He had no conception of what Pitt could mean. He was in his present place, not by his own choice, far from it! but by the King's command, and, though he was devoted to the King, he would retire to-morrow if he was distasteful to the House of Commons. (This was a safe promise, for, as we have seen, the House of Commons was with but few exceptions at his absolute disposal.) Pitt replied that he himself had no objections to a Peer as First Lord of the Treasury, but there must be men of ability and responsibility in the House of Commons, a Secretary of State and a Chancellor of the Exchequer, that they must be sufficiently supported, and they must have access to the Crown, not a nominal, but an habitual, free, familiar access. In speaking of the Chancellor of the Exchequer he burst out into so enthusiastic a eulogy of Legge, 'the child, and deservedly the favourite child of the Whigs,' that Newcastle suspected that all this was concerted between his rebellious

Chancellor of the Exchequer and his insubordinate Paymaster.

Pitt and the Duke next proceeded to analyse their own expressions; a task which the statesmen of that day seem to have avoided, to our detriment, as much as possible. Newcastle had spoken of the proposed seat in the Cabinet as a designation. 'What did this mean?' asked Pitt. 'Did it mean the seals of Secretary of State, though not immediately?' The Duke was obliged to shuffle out, for in truth he had no power to promise any such thing. Designation only meant that the seat in the Cabinet would design him as the King's man of confidence. 'Then the Secretaryship of State is not intended,' was the fierce rejoinder. The Duke replied that he was not authorised to offer more than a seat in the Cabinet. If, rejoined Pitt, 'the Secretaryships of State are to remain as they are, there is an end of any question of my giving active support to the Government in the House of Commons.'

They had arrived at an impassable barrier, Pitt would take nothing but the seals which the King would not give him, and Newcastle was determined not to force on another crisis with the King on account of Pitt; whom, in truth, he dreaded little less as a colleague than as a foe. So they turned to matters of public policy, 'and then,' writes the hapless Minister, 'nothing can equal my astonishment and concern.' He tried Pitt first with the Hessian Treaty, and then with the Russian. For the Hessian Treaty the Duke characteristically urged every reason but the true one, and for the Russian that it was the fruit of four years of negotiation, and that it would seem strange to drop it now. But Pitt was obdurate.

He would be no party to a system of subsidies. If the Duke of Devonshire attacked the Hessian subsidy in the House of Lords, as was his intention, Pitt would echo the attack in the House of Commons. If the Russian Treaty were dropped he might acquiesce in the Hessian from regard for the King; as, for the same reason, he would always speak with the utmost respect of Hanover. But no consideration would make him support both, or a system of subsidies. It was his regard for the King, presumably, which impelled him to make a further suggestion, which Newcastle did not venture to transmit even to Hardwicke. Out of the fifteen millions sterling that the King was said to have saved why, asked Pitt, should he not give Hesse 100,000*l.*, and Russia 150,000*l.*, to be out of these bad bargains? Newcastle was driven to his usual resource of the Chancellor, and suggested a conference with him in the ensuing week. Pitt agreed to this with, we may presume, a shrug of the shoulders.

Neither in truth expected anything from such a meeting, for the pleas and the powers had both been exhausted. Newcastle realised this, and ends his remarkable record of the conversation with a despairing glance at his own prospects. What was he to do? There were as usual three courses to pursue. The first, which he should infinitely prefer, would be his own retirement. This is a common cant of ministers, and with Newcastle it was more than usually insincere. Fox, he said, might succeed him at the Treasury, and Pitt for a session at any rate would have to acquiesce. The second would be for Newcastle, remaining First Minister, to throw himself into the arms of the Pitt group, with Pitt as Secretary of State and Legge at the Exchequer. But the King would never hear of this. Newcastle puts it significantly thus: 'Whether this is in any shape practicable, I leave to your Lordship and all who know the King to determine.' The third course was the one adopted, 'to accept Mr. Fox's proposal, made by my Lord Granville,' the first allusion that we have to this particular negotiation. Fox was to be the real, efficient, and trusted leader of the House of Commons. But there must be conditions. Cumberland, the patron of Fox, must give his support, so must Devonshire and Hartington. There must be a new Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Fox must act cordially with the person whom the King might appoint to that office. Murray, and indeed every one, must put their shoulders to the wheel and exert themselves on behalf of the Administration. Lastly, it might be necessary to take in the venal but inevitable Bubb.

Hardwicke answered Newcastle's report without a moment's delay, in a shrewd letter.[1] His first remark was that Pitt had taken much higher ground with the Duke than with him, perhaps because the bad news from the Ohio had made the Paymaster deem himself more valuable and necessary. He doubted whether the praises of Legge were sincere; they were probably intended to indicate a closer connection between them than really existed. But Hardwicke went straight to the two main points. The first was the general principle that the King must have a recognised Minister, what he called oddly enough 'a Minister with the King' in the House of

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[1] Add. MSS. 32858.

Commons. The other question was whether Pitt should be Secretary of State.

As to the first, if the Minister is to be subordinate, that is, not the Premier, he sees no great harm in it. 'For I have long been convinced,' continues the sagacious man, 'that whoever your Grace shall make use of as your first man and man of confidence in the House of Commons, you will find it necessary, if he be a man of reputation and ability accompanied with the ambition naturally incident to such a character, I say under those circumstances, your Grace will find it necessary to invest him with more power than, from the beginning, you thought fit to impart either to Mr. Legge or Sir Thomas Robinson.'

From this we may gather that the Chancellor had never believed in the plan of a leaderless House of Commons. How indeed could he, as a man of sense, much more as a man of rare capacity? Such a plan could only be deemed possible by an alien King and a mountebank Minister. As to the personal point, Hardwicke is not less acute. Pitt, he declares, has stiffened his demand since their interview. Pitt, he is convinced, intended to draw from the Duke a promise that it should be made a point with the King that he should be made Secretary of State within a given time; and so, when he failed in this, he proceeded to discuss measures in a more peremptory tone than he would otherwise have employed.

'Now,' says Hardwicke, 'this comes to a point which you and I have often discussed together. Whether you can think it right or bring yourself to declare to him that you really wish him in the Secretary's office, and will in earnest recommend him to the King on that foot.'

This inestimable sentence throws a flood of light on Newcastle's professions to Pitt, and on the reality of the efforts that Newcastle had employed to soften the King. It is clear, we think, from this secret utterance that Newcastle had been sincere in neither case.

Hardwicke urges that the Duke should close with Pitt. He thinks that if Newcastle were loyally to give this assurance Pitt 'would close and take his active part immediately.' Without this he is sure that Pitt believes 'that the intention is to have the use of his talents without gratifying his ambition.' In writing this Hardwicke of course knew, as Newcastle knew, that Pitt's apprehension was well founded. 'My poor opinion,' continues the Chancellor, 'is that without it all further meetings and pourparlers with this gentleman will be vain. Your heart can only dictate to you whether you should do it or not.'[1] Justly distrusting the Duke's heart, the Chancellor proceeds to appeal to his instincts. He discards, of course, the idea of Newcastle's resignation. A friend, consulted on such a point, rarely deems it decent to do otherwise; certainly no confidant of Newcastle's could have done so and retained his intimacy.

As to relying on Pitt and Legge, he agrees that nothing but the pressure of necessity could make the King adopt this course. Of course he does not say that the Duke could at any moment bring about this pressure, though that no doubt was the case. Newcastle, by his Parliamentary influence, could always produce a deadlock, as was soon to be proved. But Newcastle could, thinks Hardwicke, have Pitt without Legge. If Pitt had the seals he would not insist on Legge.

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[1] These two sentences are transposed for the sake of clearness.

The third course is that urged by Granville: to take Fox on Granville's conditions, which we may safely presume to have been those afterwards adopted. Hardwicke insinuates objections. Fox has the strong protection of Cumberland and the personal inclination of the King, but his election will be profoundly distasteful to Leicester House. Pitt, on the other hand, has 'no support at Court, and the personal disinclination of the King. He must therefore probably depend, at least for a good while, upon those who bring him thither.' Then comes the sentence about Fox and Leicester House which conveys a hint that Pitt, on the contrary, is well there. It is impossible to be more adroit. Hardwicke knew that Newcastle was fully aware that he hated Fox, and so put his objections in this indirect and skilful way. He failed, probably because Newcastle felt that to accept Fox would at any rate not necessitate a critical struggle with the King, and that Fox himself was more malleable.

Of all strange confidants it was Bubb whom Pitt, on leaving Newcastle, proceeded to take into his inmost counsels. There are always parasites of this kind in politics, universally mistrusted, and yet constantly taken into confidence on grounds of convenience. Always sympathetic, always warm, always ready to betray at the first symptom of personal advantage, they are nevertheless useful parts of the political machine, and not so contemptible as might appear. They profess little, they deceive nobody except for a fleeting moment, and they are employed, with full knowledge of their character, to sound others and report the result, to suggest from their own base experience, to bring statesmen into relation with necessary people, and do the work with which statesmen will not soil their hands. But they are perilous and slippery agents, they attract in the warmth of the moment excessive confidence, and while these indiscretions are still ringing in their ears they are already in the tents of the enemy. Still, such as they are, they will always exist, and always be utilised, for they are part of the fatality of politics.

So to Bubb Pitt betook himself on the day after that on which he had seen Newcastle, and gave a spirited account of the interview. He then spoke fully of his relations with Fox, in which really lay the key to the situation. He wished well to Mr. Fox, he did not complain of him, but he could not act with him; they could not co-operate because they were not on the same ground. Fox was not independent (*sui juris*), but he was. He had been ready during the last session to go all lengths against the Duke of Newcastle; but when it came to the pinch Fox always failed him (under the constraint, it may be presumed, of the Duke of Cumberland). *Fox had risen on his shoulders*;[1] he did not blame him for it. Fox had taken the smooth part, and left him the brunt; he did not complain. Fox, too, lived with his greatest enemies, Carteret, Stone, and Murray. And Newcastle had told him that Fox had recently offered himself to his Grace. Bubb declared that this was false, to his knowledge. Pitt replied that no one knew better than himself how great a liar Newcastle could be, and that if Fox denied this he should readily take his word against the Duke's. But all that he had recapitulated showed how impossible it was for two men to act together who stood on so different a footing as Fox and himself.

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[1] Italics ours

Bubb now scented business of the kind to which he himself was addicted, and broke in with, 'As we who are to unite in this attack *are to part no more*,'[1] it would be proper to think what was to be held out to the confederates if they succeeded.

Pitt declined to enter into this premature traffic, 'it would look too like a faction, there was no country in it'; but expressed himself, in the fashion of the day, with warmth and confidence as to Bubb himself. He thought Bubb of the greatest consequence; nothing was too good for such a man; no one was more listened to in the House and in the country. He wished to be connected with Bubb in the strictest sense politically, as he already was by marriage.[2]

Bubb demurely records these confidences, and was left happy; glad to find, as he writes, that he should receive such support in an opposition which, on patriotic and conscientious grounds, he must have pursued even had he stood alone.[3]

Once more we have to deplore the hapless destinies of political alliance and of Parliamentary twins, united in bonds of principle, who are to part no more. This conversation took place on September 3 (1755). On November 20

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[1] Italics ours.

[2] There was some family connection between Bubb and the Grenvilles, though it is not easy to trace. Bubb's property indeed, to his disgust, was entailed on Temple.

[3] Bubb, 370.

Pitt was dismissed, because of his adherence to the virtuous course which Bubb had resolved to pursue without flinching, even if isolated, with or without Pitt. Bubb records the removal in a terse entry of his diary, and the next, not less terse, records his acceptance of a lucrative post tendered by Newcastle. History has to note some such incidents, but we know of none so cynically and complacently narrated by the renegade himself.

Hardwicke made one last desperate effort to move Pitt, but without success. He writes to Newcastle on September 15 (1755): 'I have had a long conversation with the *gentleman* your Grace knows, but with little effect. I talked very fully and strongly to him upon every part of the case, both as to *persons* and *measures*. He made great professions of his regard and firm attachment to your Grace and me, but adhered to his *negative*. He puts that negative upon two things: His objections to the two treaties of subsidy . . . . his other objection arose from *Mr. F.*, with whom he declared he could not act.'[1]

On this scene, coming more and more into prominence as the King became older, and as the Prince of Wales, or rather Bute and his clique, waxed bolder, appears the mysterious and elusive influence of Leicester House. It is difficult to trace or measure this combination, except in the naked fact of an old King and a young heir, nor is it easy to trace the connection of Pitt with this party. Every movement in Leicester House was jealously watched by the politicians, much as a late Sultan is said to have tracked the movements of the least menial of his dethroned and secluded predecessor. We read of the

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[1] Add. MSS. 32859, f. 86.

Princess being stirred to wrath by her father-in-law's project of marrying her son to the daughter, supposed to be active and ambitious, of a woman she detested. Then there is the suspicion that the Heir Apparent was surrounded by persons who were more or less Jacobite; Bute himself having, it was presumed, Jacobite leanings. But the King at once desisted with rare good sense from any idea of the projected marriage, though no doubt it would have given him pleasure. And the danger of an Hanoverian sovereign becoming a Jacobite under any influence seems too fantastic for a pantomime. The real apprehension was no doubt that Leicester House might shake off the domination and destroy the long monopoly of the Whigs, as indeed it eventually did. And certainly Leicester House, with the throne full in view, was becoming more and more inclined to assert itself. Human nature and family relations had, as usual in such cases, much to do with the matter. The Hanoverian Kings did not love their heirs apparent. George the First hated his, but he had no other son to love, and indeed little capacity for loving, except mistresses who found favour with no one else. George the Second hated his with a peculiar hatred, and was thus able to devote what fatherly affection he had to give to his second son, the Duke of Cumberland. These parental preferences, however justifiable, do not tend to affection between sons. And so there was no love lost between Prince Frederick and his family on the one side, and Duke William on the other. These feelings, as is usually the case, survived, when Frederick died, with increasing intensity between the widow and her brother-in-law. She saw him on the right hand of the King, enjoying all his confidence, as was natural, and herself and her bashful son of no account; so that a new jealousy was added to the original rancour.

Understanding these facts, we are able to follow the course of Pitt. Fox was essentially the Duke of Cumberland's man, and so by the force of circumstances Pitt became allied, but not at this moment closely allied, to Leicester House. He had been a friend and servant of the dead Prince of Wales, then had quarrelled with him, but the original brand was not altogether effaced. Now he was the one champion whom the faction of the late Heir Apparent could adopt; and so the politicians began to see behind Pitt the influence of the coming King, his mother, and their favourite. Thus, when Newcastle had to make the option between Fox and Pitt, it was not merely the choice between two rival orators, but between two rival Courts, the Old and the New. We may be sure that no element in this business was more essentially present to the Minister's mind.

All this seems petty but essential; but all was petty then, as is proved by the mere fact of Newcastle being at the head of the Ministry and master of the House of Commons; and it is all essential to the reader who would understand the history of those times, because the complication of these byways and intrigues is so extreme. There was the King with Lady Yarmouth and Cumberland; there were Newcastle and Hardwicke, with the House of Commons at their feet, and anxious to remain at their feet if that were possible; there was the influence of Cumberland apart from the King, and represented by Fox; there was Bedford, powerful from his property and connections, with a clique hungry for office; there was Pitt with his Grenville relations, who were ready to give him their support, but not less ready to withdraw it if something better should offer. And around and below these was the great shifting mass of politicians by profession and cupidity, the parliamentary Zoroastrians, who worshipped the rising sun, when they could discern it; the sun which should shed upon them office, salary, and titles; striving, sweating, cringing, as Bubb, the most shameless of them all, emphasises in capital letters, 'AND ALL FOR QUARTER-DAY.' It was through this scene of confusion and intrigue that Pitt had to thread his way, not very scrupulously; for he had always lived in this society, had lost whatever thin illusions he had ever possessed, and followed the clues which his experience had taught him to prize. He played the game.

The meeting of Parliament took place two months afterwards and that period was spent by Newcastle and Hardwicke in arranging to discard Pitt and Legge, and to lean on Cumberland and Fox. Newcastle did not yield to Fox without reluctance, for it was, in Pitt's words, parting with some of his sole power. In his helplessness and despair he even offered to cede his place to Granville, who as Carteret had been his most detested bugbear, but who had now subsided into a quiescent President of the Council. Granville refused with a laugh, and preferred to conduct the negotiation with Fox. Fox had to him the merit of keeping out Pitt, whose former denunciations he had neither forgotten nor forgiven. So he had first endeavoured to inspire Murray to face, and Nov. 13, 1755.

now Fox to supplant Pitt. With a flash of his old diplomacy he was able to bring together the two mistrustful parties, on terms which Newcastle had curtly refused in the first insolence of his power, but which now, at the instance of Hardwicke as we have seen, he had to concede. The insane plan of a leaderless House of Commons, left like sheep on a barren moor, owned by an absentee Duke secluded in the Treasury, was to be abandoned. Fox was to be Secretary of State, leader of the House of Commons in name and in fact, and what was far more than either, he was authorised to announce that he represented the full influence of the King in the House 'to help or to hurt.' When the two shepherds, the old and the new, burning with mutual hatred and distrust, met to ratify the conditions, Fox suggested sardonically that it would be best that this should be the last time on which they should meet to agree, that there should be a final settlement, or none at all, meaning that it should be honest and complete. Newcastle, no doubt with a wry face, agreed. 'Then,' said Fox, 'it shall be so'; though indeed it was not. Fox stipulated for the admission or promotion of five persons, the only memorable ones of whom were George Selwyn, whose lovable and humorous personality has survived that of many more eminent contemporaries, and Hamilton, who is the only man, except the less-known Hawkins, who is remembered by a single speech. Chesterfield, on hearing of the reconstitution of the Ministry, observed with his habitual shrewdness that Newcastle had turned out everybody else and had now turned himself out. Fox at once repented of his adhesion, for Stone, Newcastle's confidant, informed him that had he not joined them the Ministry would have instantly resigned.[1] But now he had to content himself with negotiating through Rigby with the Bedford group, which he hoped to bring into office for the purpose of wrecking the administration.

Robinson made less than no difficulties in accommodating himself to the new pretensions. He only yearned to return to the Great Wardrobe of which he had been Master. And so with a pension of 2000*l.* a year, fixed upon luckless Ireland, he vanishes into space, with the natural remark that he had never looked on his seven children with so much satisfaction as on the completion of these domestic arrangements.

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[1] Orford, ii. 45.

CHAPTER XIX.

THIS blank though important space in the life of Pitt himself seems favourable for picking up a few threads which had to be dropped in the narrative of his negotiations with Newcastle.

After the baiting to which Robinson had been subjected in the first days of the session he disappeared from debate; and Fox, then in close negotiation for a seat in the Cabinet, represented the Government in the Commons, and turned a deaf ear to the proposal that he should join Pitt in a combined attack on Newcastle. Fox's game, it will be seen, was not calculated to win the confidence of Pitt, to whom, however, during the session, he showed marked courtesy on the one hand, while negotiating with the Duke on the other.

Feb. 26, 1755. The Lord Advocate had introduced a Bill continuing for a further period the provisions passed after the rising of 1745 which had temporarily placed the tenure of sheriff-deputyships at the King's pleasure instead of for life as before. This seems to have raised an animated debate, memorable to us as having produced two fine speeches from Pitt, which Horace Walpole alone mentions, and of which he gives a spirited sketch. It is only possible to give Walpole's record in his own words, as there is no other. Pitt spoke in answer to Murray (who, by-the-by, speaking in defence of the Bill, had said that there was not a single Jacobite left in Scotland) 'with great fire, in one of his best worded and most spirited declarations for liberty, but which, like others of his fine orations, cannot be delivered adequately without his own language; nor will they appear so cold to the reader, as they even do to myself, when I attempt to sketch them, and cannot forget with what soul and grace they were uttered. He did not directly oppose, but wished rather to send the Bill to the Committee, to see how it could be amended. He was glad that Murray would defend the King, only with a salve to the rights of the Revolution; he commended his abilities, but tortured him on his distinctions and refinements. He himself had more scruples; it might be a Whig delicacy—but even that is a solid principle. He had more dread of arbitrary power dressing itself in the long robe, than even of military power. When master principles are concerned, he dreaded accuracy of distinction: he feared that sort of reasoning: if you class everything, you will soon reduce everything into a particular; you will then lose great general maxims. Gentlemen may analyse a question till it is lost. If I can show him, says Murray, that it is not my Lord Judge, but Mr. Judge, I have got him into a class. For his part, could he be drawn to violate liberty, it should be *regnandi causâ*, for this King's reigning. He would not recur for precedents to the diabolic divans of the second Charles and James; he did not date his principles of the liberty of this country from the Revolution; they are eternal rights; and when God said, "*let justice be justice*," He made it independent. The Act of Parliament that you are going to repeal is a proof of the importance of the Sheriffs-depute: formerly they were instruments of tyranny. Why is this attempted? is it to make Mr. Pelham more regretted? He would have been tender of cramming down the throats of the people what they are averse to swallow. Whig and Minister were conjuncts he always wished to see. He deprecated (*sic*) those, who had more weight than himself in the Administration, to drop this; or besought that they would take it for any term that may comprehend the King's life; for seven years, for fourteen, though he was not disposed to weigh things in such golden scales.' The reader must make of this what he will.

Fox said 'that he was undetermined, and would reserve himself for the Committee; that he only spoke now, to show it was not crammed down his throat; which was in no man's power to do. That in the Committee he would be free, which he feared Pitt had not left it in his own power to be, so well he had spoken on one side. That he reverenced liberty and Pitt, because nobody could speak so well on its behalf.'[1]

The Bill came up again a few days afterwards, and we find Pitt again attacking it, and Fox apparently evading a contest with him. We are once more thrown back on Walpole's account. 'Pitt talked on the harmony of the day, and wished that Fox had omitted anything that looked like levity on this great principle. That the Ministry giving up the *durante benè placito* was an instance of moderation. That two points of the Debate had affected him with sensible pleasure—the admission that judicature ought to be free, and the universal zeal to strengthen the King's hands.

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[1] Orford, ii. 7–9.

That liberty was the best loyalty; that giving extraordinary powers to the Crown was so many repeals of the Act of Settlement. Fox said shortly, that if he had honoured the fire of liberty, he now honoured the smoke.'[1]

These arguments are not easy to follow, so the only faithful course seems to be to give the actual record.

Meanwhile it is necessary for a moment to peer outside, and take note of the world so far, and only so far, as it affects the life of Pitt; for the clouds of war were gathering fast. The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was only an armed truce, the cupidities and resentments which it had checked for the moment were still active, though mute. With two such characters as Frederick and Maria Theresa matched against each other, it was evident that Silesia would never be surrendered or abandoned without another deadly struggle. Moreover, half unconsciously, the two secular rivals, France and Britain, were drifting into a contest for supremacy over half the globe, to settle the question as to which should become the first colonising power of the world. Hostilities in India and in North America were always smouldering, and the arrangements of Aix-la-Chapelle had not extended to either region. The treaty had in no way checked the desperate war carried on in India between the English and French Companies, between Clive and Dupleix. That was presently closed for the moment by a provisional treaty signed on the spot in January 1755. In America the scene was even more poignant. There without any declaration of war, in a formal and legal state of peace, hostilities were carried on, openly and yet treacherously, by incursions connived at by the French Government. And

[1] Orford, ii. 17.

as if to add an additional horror to these sinister operations, they were accompanied by all the unspeakable barbarities of Indian warfare, the cold-blooded murder of men, women and children, rewards from the European governors for the scalps thus obtained, and by open cannibalism.[1] Christian missionaries were not ashamed to hound on these savages to murder, torture, and rapine; nay, their professed converts[2] were sometimes the keenest in butchery. For religious fanaticism imparted an ignorant zeal to the barbarous combatants, who were taught, it is said, that Christ was a Frenchman crucified by the English. The claim that the King of France was the eldest son of the Church was construed into a much more literal interpretation of divine origin.[3] There was in fact no element of atrocity wanting to this war, which was not a war; blasphemy, murder, outrage, arson, rape, torture were all employed under the pure white banner with its golden lilies. Parkman, the historian of these operations, does not record the like of the British. But this is not to affirm there were no reprisals. For war carried on in this fashion and by the employment of savages can scarcely be one-sided in its barbarities.

But apart from the perfidious ambitions of governments and the predatory lusts of savages, there could not be peace in America, nor in effect had there been since the settlement of Utrecht. Boundaries in that trackless continent were vague, and constantly overstepped. The proper limits of Nova Scotia, and the demarcation between

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[1] 'Montcalm and Wolfe,' i. 483.

[2] Ib. i. 510.

[3] Ib. i. 54, 66.

Canada and New England, were subjects of acute controversy. Under such circumstances both parties plant outposts in disputed territories, and both attempt to dislodge each other. French officers headed exploring parties, annexing vast territories by the simple expedient of nailing to a tree-trunk a tin plate stamped with the arms of France, and burying at the root a leaden tablet recording that possession had thus been taken. But there were other operations much less bloodless and futile. One of these petty engagements survives in history because it marks the first appearance of Washington, compelled in 1754 to celebrate the Fourth of July by a surrender to the French, who had surrounded him in superior numbers; and because it was the commencement of open but not declared warfare between the British and the French. Both nations now determined to send out reinforcements. 'In a moment,' says Walpole, 'the Duke of Newcastle assumed the hero, and breathed nothing but military operations; he and the Chancellor held councils of war; none of the ministers except Lord Holderness were admitted inside their tent.' With some discount for Walpole's malicious pleasantry, the picture, humorous enough to us, must have filled men like Pitt with the darkest misgivings. Pitt, as we have seen, had once been accidentally admitted into the tent and taken into confidence. He must have left it with the feeling that the destinies of the Empire were in peril so long as Newcastle was at the helm. A giant conflict for the supremacy of the world was preparing, and Newcastle was in charge of Great Britain. It was enough to give the bravest patriot a qualm. Nor were the military preparations less deplorable. Braddock was sent out at the new year with a

July 4, 1754.

Jan. 1755.

plan of campaign prepared by Cumberland. Cumberland on Braddock was a combination which might make the stoutest heart in England quail. Cumberland, who had lost every battle but the one-sided affray of Culloden, was the brain to devise. Braddock, a brutal soldier of parade experience, whose only warfare had been in Hyde Park or Hounslow, was the hand to execute. Braddock took his troops through the American bush as if they were July 9, 1755. marching from London to Windsor, and was annihilated ten miles from the French stronghold, Fort Duquesne, where now smokes toiling Pittsburg. British troops then first faced the most formidable of adversaries, an invisible foe. They advanced boldly, cheering and singing 'God save the King.' But they found that they were mere targets for a host of concealed sharpshooters. Behind every tree and rock there lurked a musket. At last they broke ranks and huddled into confusion. 'We would fight,' they answered their officers, 'if we could see anybody to fight with.' Some survivors declared that they had not seen a single Indian. Others were not so fortunate. Twelve unhappy persons were tortured and burned alive by the savage allies of the French. Braddock was mortally wounded, and died after a long silence, broken only by the one pathetic question, 'Who would have thought it?'[1] His papers fell into the hands of the French and swelled the indictment with which they declared war.[2] This evil news arrived in England at the end of August, and no doubt precipitated Newcastle's attempt to come to terms with Pitt.

Three months after the departure of Braddock, the

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[1] 'Montcalm and Wolfe,' i. 214–26.

[2] Souvenirs de Moreau, i. 62.

French in alarm fitted out a fleet of reinforcement, which sailed at the end of April, just as George II. was leaving his kingdom for his electorate, amid the scarce veiled indignation of his British subjects. The moment was critical, the King was old, his heir was young, the French were making great warlike preparations, every circumstance pointed to the grave impropriety of the departure. But the King was obdurate to all remonstrance. Not only was Hanover his home, he was also anxious to negotiate treaties of subsidy for its protection; treaties which were more conveniently signed away from Great Britain; that country being only required to endorse them in order to furnish the necessary supplies.

When it was certain that the French fleet was destined for America, Admiral Boscawen was despatched with a squadron to intercept it. Boscawen had eleven ships of the line and one frigate, the French fleet consisted of eighteen ships, eight of which were lightly armed as transports. The two armaments came into collision at the mouth of the St. Lawrence on June 7. Three French ships came into 1755. conflict with three British ships under Captain Howe. The French commander sent to ask 'Is it peace or war?' Lord Howe replied that he must ask his admiral, who replied 'War.' Thereupon Howe attacked and captured two of the enemy, but to the mortification of the British the bulk of the French fleet got safely into Louisbourg; then a Gibraltar, now a lonely pasture beaten by the surf.

During all this year attempts had been made by negotiation in London between Mirepoix, the French Ambassador, and Newcastle, to delimit the territories in dispute, but at the news of this conflict Mirepoix left London at once. Nevertheless the French behaved with signal placability, they even released the *Blandford* man-of-war, which they had captured; and there was at present no formal declaration of open hostility. For Louis XV. and his mistress did not desire war with Great Britain, nor were they ready for it. A council was held at Compiègne at which the opinion of Noailles prevailed. That was to suffer and endure, so as to attract the sympathy of all Europe against Britain; only to declare war when it was abundantly proved to be inevitable; then to limit the operations to the sea, and not to be lured into any warfare on the continent of Europe.[1] It was the Government of Newcastle that moved towards hostilities. Our Admiralty behaved with great but perhaps lawless vigour. It issued letters of marque, and before the end of the year 300 French merchant ships and 6000 French seamen had been captured.

War seemed now inevitable, although at earlier stages it might, we think, have been avoided without difficulty; and there began a general hunt for alliances, which soon developed into a complete reversal of former arrangements. Maria Theresa, thirsting for revenge, sought under the inspiration of Kaunitz a strict union with France and Russia. The tongue of Frederick, biting, uncontrolled, and especially venomous in dealing with the frailty of woman, did perhaps more than Austrian diplomacy to facilitate these arrangements; for the Empress Elizabeth and Madame de Pompadour were both stung to unrelenting animosity by Frederick's reckless ribaldry. Frederick, however, took the first step himself. While France was secretly carrying on negotiations with England, which continued to the end of 1755, and neglecting to renew her previous treaty with Prussia which expired in May 1756, Frederick signed with Great Britain in January 1756 the Treaty of Westminster, by which both parties guaranteed each other's possessions and bound themselves to take up arms against any Power which should invade Germany. This instrument had the indirect but grave effect of neutralising the King's treaty with Russia for the defence of Hanover, for it precluded any foreign Power from marching troops into Germany. The news of this agreement was received at Versailles with consternation and wrath. The French Court replied to it by the Treaty of Versailles (May 1, 1756), hurriedly concluded with Austria and extremely one-sided. France agreed to respect the Austrian Netherlands, from which she might have hoped for some compensation in case of success. Both parties agreed to guarantee each other's dominions, and a secret article, aimed at Prussia, made the compact more stringent. In August a treaty still more advantageous to Austria was concluded between the two Powers; but in this some frontier towns in the Austrian Netherlands, though not specified, were to be conceded to France, when Austria was once more in possession of Silesia and Glatz.[1]

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[1] Moreau, i. 58.

It was believed in Europe that this counterbalancing treaty to that of Westminster ensured the peace of the Continent. But the world did not yet know Frederick. He was couching for a spring. Two circumstances impelled him. He had become aware through a corrupt Saxon clerk of a correspondence between Austria and Saxony concerting a vast confederacy against him. The second was this.

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[1] Waddington. Louis XV. et le Renversement des Alliances, pp. 471–6.

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We have noticed the Russian and Hessian treaties of subsidy. That with Russia had been originally concluded with a view to operations against Frederick himself,[1] and to that purpose the Empress Elizabeth was determined that it should be confined. By a personal declaration[2] and by two resolutions of the Russian Senate[3] it was made clear that hostility to Frederick alone inspired the Russian share of the treaty. He saw the circle closing round him. Three outraged women were directing the forces of three Empires against him. He had nothing to rely upon but his own country, Britain, and himself. Cognizant of the plot against him, he determined to have the advantage of attack. Like a leopard he sprang upon Dresden. Before the Saxons had well realised that war was impending he was at the throat of the electorate, and had seized the capital, the army, and the compromising papers which justified his action. This was the beginning of the world-wide struggle known as the Seven Years' War, and it occurred in September 1756.

This is all that is necessary for our story, a mere glimpse of the intrigues and rancours which were lashing all Europe into storm. We must now return to the parliamentary arena.

1755. On September 15, George II. deigned to return to his British dominions, and on November 13 he opened his Parliament. Two circumstances were considered noteworthy in connection with the formal occasion. Fox, as leader of the House, rehearsed the Speech from the

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[1] Raumer, Frederick II. and his Times, 227.

[2] Ibid. 233.

[3] Carlyle, Frederick, iv. 509.

Throne, as was then the custom, at the Cockpit; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Paymaster, and the Grenvilles were conspicuous by their absence. Fox, too, summoned his supporters by a note of the kind then, as now, customary, but in terms which gave offence to the susceptible independence of members; intimating that the King was about to make him Secretary of State, though not till after the first debate, 'which may be a warm one,' so that his seat might not be vacated until after the Address had been voted. He was also to take upon him 'the conduct of the House of Commons.' This last expression was animadverted upon in Parliament, and Fox admitted that he should have said 'conduct of His Majesty's affairs in the House of Commons.' In these days, when 'leader of the House of Commons' is the recognised title of the principal Minister in the House, it is not without interest to notice this constitutional squeamishness.

The King's Speech contained the following paragraph, which strikes the reader as something less than candid:—

'With a sincere desire to preserve my people from the calamities of war, as well as to prevent, in the midst of these troubles, a general war from being lighted up in Europe, I have always been ready to accept reasonable and honourable terms of accommodation; but none such have hitherto been proposed on the part of France. I have also confined my views and operations to hinder France from making new encroachments, or supporting those already made; to exert our right to a satisfaction for hostilities committed in a time of profound peace: and to disappoint such designs as, from various appearances and preparations, there is reason to think, have been formed against my kingdoms and dominions.'

Members met to hear the Royal Speech in the electric condition which bodes a crisis. There had been a long political truce; but this was evidently about to come to an end. Ministers had to bear the burden of the Russian and Hessian treaties, which the Speech from the Throne commended to the attention of Parliament. War with France was impending; indeed, a French invasion was daily expected. There was a new leader, and, consequently, a new opposition. Pitt was evidently prepared to launch thunderbolts at the Administration. Leicester House was said to be behind him. There was an animating sense of conflict in the air.

Once more the parliamentary history fails us, and disdains to record one of the most memorable passages in its annals; so once more we are thrown on the authority and the sketches of Walpole; sometimes brilliant, but more often confused and defective.

The debate in the Commons lasted till near five in the morning, an hour then almost unprecedented.

It was distinguished by that famous effort which gave Single-speech Hamilton his nickname. Walpole, in recording and eulogising it, says: 'You will ask, what could be beyond this? Nothing but what was beyond what ever was, and that was Pitt.' Pitt, indeed, after sitting through the eleven hours of the debate, rose and delivered, with inimitable spirit and all the dramatic force that the greatest actor of his age could impart, a speech of an hour and a half, which contains his most famous figure, and which perhaps he never exceeded.

'His eloquence,' says Walpole, 'like a torrent long obstructed, burst forth with more commanding impetuosity.' For ten years he had been muzzled, and now he revelled in his freedom. 'He spoke at past one (in the morning) for an hour and thirty-five minutes. There was more humour. wit, vivacity, fine language, more boldness,—in short, more astonishing perfections, than even you who are used to him can conceive.'

He 'surpassed himself, and then I need not tell you that he surpassed Cicero and Demosthenes. What a figure would they with their formal laboured cabinet orations make vis-a-vis his manly vivacity and dashing eloquence at one o'clock in the morning, after sitting in that heat for eleven hours!'

This enthusiasm from the least enthusiastic of men adds to our regrets that so faint a memory of this dazzling speech remains. And yet perhaps we were wise to be grateful that we have only the description. It seems not impossible that the words taken down verbatim by some old parliamentary hand in the reporters' gallery would seem cold or tawdry without the soul and grace which animated them, and which haunted Horace Walpole for long years afterwards. Some of the allusions which have been noted down seem forced, some of the bursts incoherent, some of the irony obscure. But those who heard it palpitated with emotion, they saw the divine fire of the orator, while posterity can only grope among the cold ashes for the burning fragments poured forth in the wrath of the eruption.

'Haughty, defiant, conscious of injury, and of supreme abilities,' he offered a great contrast to Legge, who fought by his side with different weapons; for Legge was studiously moderate, deferential, and artful; 'gliding to revenge.' Yet Pitt himself began with expressions of veneration for the King, and of gratitude for 'late condescending goodness and gracious openings,' alluding to the offer of a seat in the Cabinet. It was obvious from this that he did not mean the door of the Closet to be closed on him, or to try again to force it by attack. But, he continued, the very respect he felt for that august name made him deprecate the unconstitutional use made of it in this debate.

Egmont had argued that we were to have the Hessian and Russian mercenaries to fall back upon in case our fleets were defeated. Why if that were so, asked Pitt, did we not hire of Russia ships rather than men? The answer was simple: because ships could not defend Hanover. Must we drain, he asked, presumably in obscure allusion to Russia, our last vital drop and send it to the North Pole? We had been told that Carthage was undone in spite of her navy. But that was not until she betook herself to land operations. Carthage, too, he added, pointing directly to the enterprises of Cumberland, had a Hannibal who would pass the Alps. We were told, too, that we must assist Hanover out of justice and gratitude. As to justice, there was a charter which barred any such consideration. Gratitude was only in question if Hanover should be involved in anything which called down on her the resentment of France in consequence of any quarrel of ours. But, to speak plainly, these expressions were unparliamentary and unconstitutional. The King owed a duty to his people which should not be obscured by such phraseology. Our ancestors would never have stooped to such adulation.

Then he turned with the greatest contempt to Sir George Lyttelton: 'A gentleman near me has talked of writers on the law of Nations. But Nature is the best writer; she will teach us to be men and not to truckle to power.' As he proceeded, he slowly swelled into his famous burst. 'I, who am at a distance from the *sanctum sanctorum*—I, who travel through a desert and am overwhelmed with mountains of obscurity—cannot so easily catch a gleam to direct me to the beauties of these negotiations. For there are parts of this Address which do not seem to come from the same quarter as the rest. I cannot unravel this mystery. But, yes!' he exclaimed with an air of sudden enlightenment, clapping his hand to his forehead, 'I too am now inspired. I am struck by a recollection. I remember at Lyons to have been taken to see the conflux of the Rhone and the Saône. The one is a gentle, feeble, languid stream, and, though languid, of no depth; the other a boisterous and impetuous torrent. Yet they meet at last. And long,' he added, with bitter sarcasm, 'may they continue united, to the comfort of each other, and to the glory, honour, and security of this nation.'

This is all that we possess of this renowned flight and in this faint form it does not strike one as particularly impressive. But the actual words of the orator were probably very different; and nothing can preserve for us the voice, the eye, the darting accent and the concentrated fire of delivery which imparted such tremendous force to the apostrophe. In any case, the effect was instant and prodigious. After the debate Fox asked Pitt, 'Who is the Rhone?' 'Is that a fair question?' answered Pitt, for no orator likes to be cross-examined about his metaphors. 'Why,' rejoined Fox good-humouredly, 'as you have said so much that I did not wish to hear, you may tell me one thing that I want to hear. Am I the Rhone, or Lord Granville?' 'You are Granville,' returned Pitt. He meant, of course, what was true, that Fox and Granville were now practically one, and one in opposition to himself.

After this climax the notes of the remainder of the speech seem comparatively poor. By adopting these measures, he urged, we are losing sight of our proper force, the Navy. It was the Navy which, by making us masters of Cape Breton in the last war, had secured the restoration of Flanders and the Barrier Fortresses. And yet even then we had had to conclude a bad peace. Moreover, bad as it was, our Ministers had suffered such constant infractions of it that they would have been stoned in the streets had they not at last shown signs of resentment. And yet, even now, they seem to have already forgotten the cause in which they took up arms, for at present they are not acting on behalf of Britain. These treaties are not English measures, but Hanoverian. Are they indeed measures of prevention? Are they not rather measures of aggression and provocation? Will they not irritate Prussia and light up a general war? If that be the result, I will follow to the death the authors of this policy, for this is the day that I hope will give a colour to my life. And yet I fear it is useless to try and stem the torrent. Ministers evidently mean a land war, and how preposterous a war. Hanover is their only base, for they cannot gain the alliance of the Dutch. I remember, everybody remembers, when you did force them to join you: all our misfortunes are due to those daring, wicked counsels (of Granville's). Out of them sprung a ministry,' he continued, referring to the forty-eight hours phantom of Pulteney and Carteret. 'I saw that ministry. In the morning it flourished. It was green at noon. By night it was cut down and forgotten.' What if a ministry should spring out of this subsidy? It is contended, moreover, that it will dishonour the King to reject these treaties which he has concluded. But was not the treaty of Hanau transmitted to us in the same way and rejected here? If these treaties are really a preventive measure, they are only preventive of Newcastle's retirement.

Then he ridiculed Murray's elaborate compassion of the aged Sovereign. He too could appeal for commiseration of the King. He could picture him deprived of any honest counsel, spending his summer in his electorate, surrounded by affrighted Hanoverians, without any one near him to keep him in mind of the policy and interest of England, or of the fact that we cannot reverse the laws of Nature, and make Hanover other than an open, defenceless country. He too could foresee the day, within the next two years, when the King would be unable to sleep in St. James's; but that would be because his slumbers would be disturbed by the clamours of a bankrupt people.

These are all the shreds that remain of this glorious rhapsody. It would perhaps be better that nothing had survived. Each student must try and reconstruct for himself, like some rhetorical Owen, out of these poor bones the majestic structure of Pitt's famous speech.

Fox replied with obvious languor and fatigue, and the division was taken between four and five. On the first question, that the words promising assistance to Hanover should be omitted, the supporters of the Government were 311 to 105. On the second amendment, which obscurely questioned the policy of both treaties the numbers were 290 to 89. The faithful Commons were still able to be loyal to Newcastle. Against that pasteboard rock Pitt's billows broke in vain.[1]

Next day (November 15, 1755) Fox received the seals. Five days afterwards Pitt, Legge, and George Grenville were dismissed by notes from Lord Holdernesse, the colleague of Fox in the Secretaryship of State. Fox indeed declares in a letter to Welbore Ellis, then peevish at not getting a better place, that he did not know till the last moment of the intention to remove anybody but Legge.[2] To George Grenville, Bute, now beginning to show himself above ground, but still with circumspection, sent a significant note of congratulation. '’Tis glorious,' he wrote, 'to suffer in such a cause and with such companions.' Pitt received an even more gratifying communication from Temple, who settled on him a thousand a year till better times. We cannot perhaps blame Pitt for accepting this offer, since probably there was no other way of maintaining Lady Hester in decent comfort; for we may easily surmise that he had squandered his own fortune on buildings, gardens, and the like; as Temple probably knew. But we could wish that he had done so with less effusion. 'How decline or how receive so great a generosity so amiably offered.' Lady Hester, who had begun the letter of thanks, 'was literally not in a situation to write any farther.' Pitt was 'little better able to hold the pen than Lady Hester. We are both yours more affectionately than words can express. We could have slept upon the Earl of Holdernesses' letter (of dismissal). But our hearts must now wake to gratitude and you, and wish for nothing but the return of day to embrace the best and noblest of brothers.' Even this is not sufficient. Next day he must write again to say to Lord Temple, 'that I am more yours than my own, and that I equally love and revere the kindest of brothers and the noblest of men.'

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[1] Orford, ii. 55–62.

[2] Fox to Ellis. Holland House MSS.

Language less ecstatic would better have become a great man accepting a serious pecuniary obligation. In truth Pitt never had any scrupulous idea of personal independence. He had accepted a borough from Newcastle, whom he then suspected and despised. Now it was an allowance from Temple, whom, from close intimacy and kinship, he must have known to be an intriguing politician, who was not likely to give without expecting return. A few years hence it was to be a pension from the Crown.

With regard to money indeed he had no very careful or exalted standard. In such matters he was indifferent, reckless, and heedless of any nicety of scruple, except as regards the public. He never seems to have considered how important solvency is to character. He was always, after his marriage, quite unnecessarily, in desperate straits for money. Indifference to the fact that pecuniary independence is a main though not necessary base of moral independence was a flaw in his own life, and was the worst inheritance that he transmitted to his illustrious son.

The announcement of Legge's successor at the Exchequer provoked universal hilarity. It was Lyttelton. We have seen that in the last debate Pitt had turned with fierce scorn on his former ally. No doubt he was aware of Lyttelton's approaching elevation. But their historic friendship had been dissolved for a year. In November 1754, at the heedless or mischievous instance of the younger Horace Walpole, Lyttelton, with the best intentions and the most inane execution possible, had hurried off, without consultation with his friend, to effect a reconciliation between Newcastle, Pitt's enemy, and Bedford, who was allied to Pitt by a common hatred of the Minister. Newcastle received the negotiator with his wonted effervescence, and gave or appeared to give full powers. Away sped Lyttelton, bursting with the importance of an amateur diplomatist. But at the mere mention of his mission the other Duke nearly kicked the messenger of peace downstairs, and at once communicated the secret overture to Pitt. The result to Lyttelton was for the moment unmixed disaster. Pitt publicly broke with him, Newcastle of course disowned him, he indeed disowned himself. Henceforth he was banned by the Cousinhood, and incurred a wrath and vengeance as implacable as that of the Carbonari. Now, however, he had his reward, for it can scarcely be doubted that his elevation to the Exchequer was intended partly as a plaster for his diplomatic wounds, partly as an annoyance to the party of Pitt. Any motive indeed but fitness for the office can be suggested for his promotion, to which he was lured by the promise of a peerage.[1] If, however, the annoyance it would cause to his late friends was a reason, it failed in its object. For Lyttelton, in his new office, gave the amplest opportunity for the wreaking of their revenge. He was, as we have seen, grotesque as a diplomatist. He was even more unfit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer.

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[1] Camelford.

Lyttelton had been a promising young man, but promising young men frequently fail to mature, and he became a minor politician, a minor poet, a minor historian. As a politician, he was principally known for the delivery of pompous prepared harangues. He wrote a pathetic and not wholly forgotten monody on the death of his first wife, to which he could have added a new and poignant emphasis after his second marriage. He wrote a treatise on the conversion of St. Paul, which earned the commendation of Dr. Johnson. He wrote some 'Dialogues of the Dead,' which Dr. Johnson was not able to commend. He was now writing an elaborate History of Henry the Second, on the printer's corrections in which he spent a thousand pounds, and was soon to publish with a score of pages of errata. But his literary renown rests on the dedication of 'Tom Jones.'

He was, however, best known to the public at large by his eccentric appearance and demeanour. 'Extremely tall and extremely thin, he bent under his own weight,' says his nephew Camelford. 'His face was so ugly,' says Hervey, 'his person so ill-made, and his carriage so awkward, that every feature was a blemish, every limb an incumbrance, and every motion a disgrace.' Horace Walpole says of him that he had the figure of a spectre and the gesticulations of a puppet. Chesterfield portrays him as the embodiment of all in manner and deportment that was to be avoided. His legs and arms, said the urbane peer, seem to have undergone the rack, his head hanging limp on his shoulder the first stroke of the axe. As absent as a Laputan, he leaves his hat in one room, his sword in another, and would leave his shoes, if unfastened, in a third. 'Who's dat!' wrote the satirist,

'Who's dat who ride astride de pony,
So long, so lank, so lean and bony?
Oh! he be de great orator Little-toney.'

He was obviously something of a butt from his physical peculiarities and awkwardness, and a butt is ill placed in high office.

Gawky, fussy, pedantic, he was what in these days we should call a prig; a kindly prig, with a warm heart, some literary ability, and strong religious feeling; but for all that an unmistakable, inveterate, incurable prig. The word 'prig' is untranslatable and uncommunicable. It denotes nothing unamiable, nothing distasteful. It marks only a strange flaw; partly of intellect, partly of character, partly of accent. And one feels that it was impossible not to like Lyttelton, for he was full of friendliness and virtue. With Pitt he was reconciled within a decade, and mourned his death with a sincere sorrow which was not then abundant.

But the Exchequer is a peculiar office requiring peculiar gifts. A dull man may succeed in it if he possess them; without them the greatest talents will fail. Lyttelton possessed none of them. He was unable, it was alleged, to work out the simplest sum in arithmetic. He was ignorant of the first principles of finance. The Exchequer never had a more preposterous Chancellor, till Dashwood appeared. He had better have left it alone.

Fox, whose accession to the leadership was said to have inspired Murray with courage, must have watched with gloomy forebodings the figure set up in the Exchequer to face the lightnings of Pitt. The most that he could hope was that it would act as an efficient conductor. Yet Fox needed all the strength that he could muster. For no one despised his chief more than he, or had a greater respect for the powers of his rival.

It should further be noted that this ministry had a luckless connection which made it known as 'the Duke's ministry'; for it had been formed under the auspices and at the recommendation of the disastrous Cumberland. 'Never,' says Almon, 'was an administration more unpopular and odious.'

War had now been declared between the Government and Pitt, who now certainly had the latent countenance of the Heir Apparent, or of the clique who represented the Heir Apparent; and there was no delay in coming to blows. The very day after Pitt's dismissal, Welbore Ellis, a Lord of Nov. 21, 1755. the Admiralty, who was destined to live on as a Nestor in politics and be made a peer by Pitt's son, moved for 50,000 seamen, mentioning that the peace establishment was 40,000. It was a formal motion, and members were leaving the House, when they were recalled by the awful tones of Pitt, declaring that he shuddered at hearing that our naval resources were so narrowed. He recalled his former protest in 1751 against reduction. He would hunt down the authors of these disastrous measures which made the King's crown totter on his head. This noble country of ours was being ruined by the silly pride of one man and the subservience of his colleagues, and some day we should have to answer for it; unless already overwhelmed by some catastrophe brought about by France, our hereditary enemy. All this trouble arose from the petty struggle for power. What power was it that was sought, what kind of power, was it only that of doing good? On an English question like this he would not impede unanimity but implore it; he would ask favours in such a cause of any minister, would have gone that morning to Fox's first levee to ask him to accept 50,000 men besides marines. (The vote asked for was for 50,000 men, including 9113 marines.) If that could be obtained it would be the first thing done for this country since the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. He obscurely intimated charges of treachery and collusion. And now, he added, shame and danger had come together. He himself had been alarmed by intelligence on the highest authority. These terrors had been communicated to the House, which was willing to grant the King any assistance for any English object. But there was an essential difference between the ministry and that House. The ministry thought of everything but the public interest; the House was ready to afford everything for it. The House, he added mysteriously, was a fluctuating body, but he hoped would be eternal; and he concluded with a prayer for the King, with his royal posterity, and for this 'poor, forlorn, distressed country.'

It is not always easy to trace the sequence of Pitt's speeches in Walpole's notes, nor is it possible to tell whether the confusion is due to the oration or the notes. The notes were probably made during the debate with the intention of filling in the outlines while recollection was still fresh; an intention which, as is usual with such intentions, was, it may be safely surmised, never carried out. But we are inclined to attribute obscurity in the main to the abrupt rhapsodical transitions of Pitt's speeches. They require, as reported by Walpole, almost as much interpretation as Cromwell's. In this one we discern great court paid to the House of Commons, so hostile to himself; unrelenting scorn of the Government; and bitter emphasis on British as opposed to Hanoverian interests. The peroration as barely reported seems below the level of a debating society. But, then, we must remember that no fervent and exalted apostrophe, prolonged as this probably was, can be adequately transmitted in a naked sentence, or perhaps in any conceivable report.

Fox replied with admirable temper, a self-control all the more laudable and noted because of his usual impetuousness. He took up Pitt's sneer at petty struggles for power. What the motives of these struggles for power had been let those tell who had struggled most and longest for power. They had been told that nobody round the King had sense or virtue, that sense and virtue resided somewhere else. How was the King to know where they are to be found? for he feared that *this* House of Commons would not point in the required direction. He ended by asking why Pitt had not asked sooner for his augmentation of force.

This called up Pitt again, who denied that he had ever asserted that there were no sense and virtue near the Throne. No man had ever suffered so much as himself from those stilettoes of a Court which assassinate the fair repute of a man with his Sovereign. The insinuation of his having struggled for power had been received by the House with so much approval, that he must take notice of the charge. Had he yielded to the poor and sordid measures which are ruining the country he might, no doubt, have been admitted to the confidence of the Closet. Then, carried by anger beyond the facts, he went further, and said that as he was not prepared then to enter into the details of the private transactions of a whole summer, he would only say that he might have had what Fox had accepted. Unfortunately for himself, however, the measures contemplated were so disastrous that his conscience and his honour had forbidden him to support them; though he would have strained conscience a little, perhaps, to be admitted to the confidence of the King. No, it was not failure in the struggle for power that was the cause of his exclusion from office. Was it not that he would not approve of the Russian and Hessian treaties? He challenged a denial.

Fox rose in reply, and said that he was ready to forget what Pitt had said about the lack of sense and virtue near the Throne.

Pitt, evidently beside himself with wrath, interrupted him, and said he rose to order, and, on that long-suffering plea, delivered another long speech. The phrase about sense and virtue, he declared on his honour, was none of his. What he said was that France would found her hopes on the want of sense, understanding, and virtue in those that govern here. Fox's modesty appeared to have taken these words to himself; but he had not put him right sooner, as the statement of the plain truth would sooner or later be sufficient. He would remind that gentleman of certain efforts which had been made (alluding to their brief coalition against Newcastle) to limit the power at which he had hinted. As to invective, he was not fond of employing it, but no man feared it less than himself. He was, however, complimentary to Fox; would, though no betting man, back his sense and spirit; believed that we should get some information from abroad now that he was in power; but could not treat him as *the* minister, for that he was not yet.

'But[1] he asks why I did not call out sooner. *My* calling out was more likely to defeat than promote. When I remonstrated for more seamen, I was called an enemy to Government: now I am told that I want to strew the King's pillow with thorns: am traduced, aspersed, calumniated from morning to night. *I* would have warned the King: did *he?* If he with his sense and spirit had represented to the King the necessity of augmentation, it would have been made—but what! if there is any man so wicked—don't let it be reported that I say there is—as to procrastinate the importing troops from Ireland, in order to make subsidiary forces necessary.[2] This whole summer I have been looking for Government. I saw none. Thank God, His Majesty was not here. The trade of France has been spared sillily, there has been dead stagnation. Orders contradicting one another were the only symptoms of spirit. When His Majesty returned, his kingdom was delivered back to him more like a wreck than as a vessel able to stem the storm. Perhaps a little sustentation of life to the country will be obtained by a wretched peace. These are my sentiments, and when a man has truth on his side, he is not to be overborne by quick interrogatories.' It may be presumed, and indeed confidently hoped, that this was not Pitt's actual speech, though Walpole gives it as the very words. They are probably only heads. He continued with softening expressions to Fox. Want of virtue was the characteristic not merely of the Government but of the age. He himself was glad to show a zeal not inferior to that of ministers; let them show him how to serve the King, and then let them, if they could, tax him with strewing the royal pillow with thorns. But what were their own services? Murray indeed had boasted that 140,000 of the best troops in Europe were provided for the defence of—what? of Hanover. But what of England? What of the Colonies? Compare the countries, compare the forces destined for the defence of each! Two miserable battalions of Irish, who scarcely ever saw one another, had been sent to America as to the shambles. If his comparison of forces for Hanover and for the Empire was exaggerated, he would be glad to be told his error.

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[1] Walpole here professes to give Pitt's words exactly.

[2] *I.e.*, suppose any man should have purposely put off bringing hither troops from Ireland, with the object of making this country appear so unprotected as to require foreign mercenaries.

Fox kept his temper, and remained on the defensive. He not unnaturally commented on the disorderliness of Pitt's speech to order. He did not 'on his honour' know what was the offer which Pitt had rejected. He himself had waited till everybody had refused, passing the summer at Holland House, as happy as any man in Parliament. He was in favour of the subsidies, and when that was known he was told 'Then support them'; and so he did. When his opinion changed he should leave office. He wished all evil might befall him if he had injured Pitt with the King, for he thought nothing so dishonourable as to accuse a man where he could not defend himself.

Murray followed with covert but bitter innuendoes; defended Pelham's reduction of 2000 men, and had thought that that Minister had at least died in friendship with Pitt. This again brought Pitt on his feet to say that his friendship for Pelham had been as real as Murray's. Murray continued coolly. The sting of his waspish speech was in its tail. He wanted to clear up one particular point for his own information. He understood Pitt to say that he had refused the Secretaryship of State: pray, had he?

He had his enemy at the point of the sword. Pitt had certainly, as we have seen, with incredible rashness, at least insinuated this, if not declared it. He now had to rise and eat his words: 'he had only refused to come into measures'![1]

Walpole apologises for recording this debate, tedious as it is, at such a length. We must do the same, and his excuse is ours. Little was said on the question, and indeed there was scarcely a question to discuss. But the points of the speeches, so far as we can discern them, throw light on the speakers, more especially on the reckless, impetuous character of Pitt, even at this time.

[1] Orford, ii. 67–76.

CHAPTER XX.

THE bombardment of the new Ministry continued without intermission, for Pitt was determined to wreak his vengeance on Newcastle and Fox. We may, moreover, presume that, seeing the critical condition of affairs and the incompetence of the Ministry to wrestle with them, he, conscious of great powers, was determined to become a directing Minister. He was now forty-seven, in the full ripeness of character and intellect. Neither he nor the country could afford to wait.

Dec. 2, 1755. Ten days after the last debate, Lord Pulteney, the sole and short-lived hope of his famous father, introduced a Bill to give the prizes captured before a declaration of war to the seamen who had captured them, should war be afterwards declared. Pitt and his section intervened, and the engagement developed from a skirmish into a battle. The debate turned largely on pressing; that practice having brought great complaints from Scotland, where 'mobs are more dangerous and more mischievous than our mobs in England, not contenting themselves with clubs and bludgeons, but possessing themselves of as many firearms and other mortal weapons as they can possibly come at.' This perhaps was not wonderful, when it was admitted that a gang had surrounded a church, and pressed part of the congregation as it came out. But it soon soared from that point to the question of our relations with France.

Fox opposed the Bill, which he said would be considered as a veiled declaration of war. France was patient because she wished to persuade her allies that we were the aggressors, and so induce them to join her. The passing of the Bill would furnish the very proof she required. The whole gist of the matter lay in the word 'now,' 'the hinge,' he said with a painful confusion of metaphor, 'upon which the very marrow of this debate must turn.' Were peace hopeless such a Bill might be necessary; now it could only do harm. Pitt followed Fox and made play with the word 'now,' for as Murray said in reply: 'He has the happy faculty of being able to turn the most important word, the most serious argument, into ridicule. He pointed out from examples in the reign of Elizabeth and Charles II. that we might be at war for many years without declaring war, and supported the Bill; as did Richard Lyttelton (though the House, says Rigby, can no longer be brought to hear a word from him), and George Grenville. The most piquant part of the speeches of both Pitt and Fox related to Walpole, who had now from a bugbear become a fetish. Fox pronounced a high eulogy upon him, but denied that his parliaments had been venal. Pitt said that he himself had always opposed Walpole when in power, but after resignation had always 'spoken well of him as a man.' Here there was a laugh, which Pitt angrily rebuked. Was it not more honourable to respect a man when his power had come to an end than before? Walpole had no doubt 'for many years an amazing influence in this House, and the enquiry, stifled as it was, made it pretty evident from whence that influence proceeded!' Legge swelled the chorus of devotion to a

Minister who had scarce a friend at his fall, by declaring that 'he was an honour to human nature and the peculiar friend to Great Britain!' Death, in British politics, magnanimously closes most accounts with a credit balance.[1]

Dec. 5, 1755. Three days afterwards, Barrington, the new Secretary at War, moved the Army Estimates. Here we are again thrown upon Walpole, whose records, precious as they are, are the notes of an amateur, jotted down at the time with the idea of subsequent expansion, but not subsequently expanded. Indeed, when he came to use them, his memory, it is probable, no longer availed for the purpose. But from the account of the last debate on December 2, 1755, the Parliamentary history, incredible as it may seem, records no speech of Pitt's till the last month of 1761, and then only a formal reply.

Pitt, 'in one of his finest florid declamations,' seconded the motion for an army of 34,263 men, which was an augmentation of 15,000 men. He would have moved for a larger number, had not Barrington promised to move for more men when he brought in a Bill for the better recruiting of the army, a pledge which seemed to meet the general anxiety of the House. Rigby, who gives us this information, says that Pitt's speech was most violent and abusive, but admits that it was a very fine piece of declamation.[2] Both Walpole and Rigby, it will be observed, use this vigorous substantive to characterise the speech.

Pitt again used the language of tenderness and devotion to the King, deplored to see him in his old age, and his kingdom exposed to attack; and even his amiable posterity, *born among us*, sacrificed by unskilful Ministers.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xv. 544-616.

[2] Bedford Corr. ii. 179.

The innuendo at the King's foreign birth betrays the sarcasm underlying Pitt's effusive loyalty. One cannot also but suspect that his constant allusions to the venerable age of George II. were not intended to be wholly agreeable to a King who piqued himself on being gay and libertine. 'He then drew a striking and masterly picture of a French invasion reaching London, and of the horror ensuing while there was a formidable enemy within the capital itself, as full of weakness as full of multitude; a flagitious rabble, ready for every nefarious action; of the consternation in the City, where the noble, artificial, yet vulnerable fabric of public credit should crumble in their hands. How would Ministers be able to meet the aspect of so many citizens dismayed? How could men so guilty meet their countrymen?'

The King's Speech of last year, he continued, had been calculated to lull the country into repose. Had His Majesty's Ministers not sufficient understanding, or foresight, or virtue, he repeated the words that they might not again be misquoted, to lay before him the real danger? Elsewhere, where the King himself had the slightest suspicion even of a fancied danger, we knew what vast preparations had been made. Did the subjects of his kingdom lack that prudent foresight which his subjects of the electorate possessed in so eminent a degree? Alas! that he should live to see a British Parliament so unequal to its duties. There were but ten thousand men left in England. Not half that number would be available to defend the royal family and the metropolis. 'Half security is full danger.'

'Accursed be the man,' he continued, 'who will not do all he can to strengthen the King's hands, and he will indeed receive the malediction. Strengthen the Sovereign by laying bare the weakness of his Councils: urge him to substitute reality to incapacity, futility, and the petty love of power. It is the little spirit of domination, the ambition of being the only figure among cyphers, which has caused the decay of this country. The ignominious indulgence of patronage, the poor desire to dispose of places, should be left for times of relaxation: rough times such as these require wisdom. The cost of the augmentation proposed to-day, two hundred and eighty thousand pounds, would last year have given us security. Yet the danger was last year as visible as now to the eye of foresight. The first attribute of a wise Minister is to leave as little as possible exposed to contingencies. Now, for want of that foresight, stocks will fall, and hurry along with them the ruin of the City, vulnerable in proportion to its opulence. In other countries the treasure remains in a city which is not sacked. But paper credit like ours may be wounded even in Kent. It is like the sensitive plant, it need not be cropped; extend but your hand, it withers and dies.'

Barrington, the orator continued, had cited the Romans. He need not go so far afield, our own days had produced as great examples. In 1746, thirteen regiments had been raised by noblemen who, though they had not like the Romans left their ploughs, had left their palaces to save their country. With what scorn, depression, and cruelty, so far as contempt is cruelty, had they been treated!

He wished the country gentry encouraged to raise a militia, for he was anxious to call the country out of that enervated condition that the menace of twenty thousand men from France could shake it. It was our Government that was degenerate, not our people. He wished the breed restored that had formerly carried our glory so high. What did those Ministers deserve, and again he insinuated mysterious hints of connivance and collusion, what did those Ministers deserve, who, after Washington had been defeated and our forts taken, advised his Majesty to trust to so slender a force as had been sent. He was for no vindictive proceedings against them; they erred from the weakness of their heads rather than their hearts. But a sagacity something less than that of a Richelieu or a Burleigh could have foreseen what would happen.

Fox replied with urbanity and compliment, for there was at this time a marked courtesy in the language of the two protagonists, as of men who did not know how soon they might be allies. Pitt denounced Newcastle, and Fox did not defend him. This, too, must be noticed. Why, Fox now asked, had Pitt not made this noble speech sooner, when we were indeed asleep, before the French had wakened us. 'If he had made it,' said Fox, 'I am sure I should have remembered it: I am not apt to forget his speeches.' Let Pitt himself take in hand a Militia Bill. It was evidently Fox whom Pitt had described as treating the thirteen regiments with contempt, at least Fox now fitted the cap on himself. He said that he thought obloquy too harsh a term to apply to his language on that occasion; nevertheless, he should not disown anything he had said. But he must make a clear distinction between these noble persons. He thanked God there was one noble duke, able and willing to save his country, who went to the King, and offered to go and try if, with his lowlanders, he was not a match for any highlanders. This was an elaborate compliment to Bedford, whose political lowlanders were now at the service of the Government, though not the Chief himself. Fox at the same time made an invidious comparison to the detriment of the Duke of Montagu, and was on the point of saying that he must discriminate between dukes, for though some deserved everything from their country for the part they took, yet he should not be for trusting others to raise a regiment who could not raise half a crown. There was evidently money to be made out of these patriotic impulses.[1]

Pitt excused himself for not having sooner raised the cry of danger on the ground that he had been lulled into composure by the previous Speech from the Throne. When he became alarmed he made representations in private, so long as he was allowed to do so. But now the alarm must be sounded in Parliament itself, for we have invited into our bowels a war that was the child of ignorance and connivance. If there be justice in Heaven, Ministers must some day answer for this.

Nugent, an Irish adventurer of the type known to comedy, paid his court to Newcastle by a burlesque attack on Pitt. And even Robinson appeared once more on the scene with a panegyric on himself, which, though ridiculous to his audience, was by no means superfluous. The other notable speeches, delivered by Charles Townshend, Sackville, and Beckford, do not affect our subject.[2]

Dec. 8, 1755. Five days later, George, who was afterwards Marquis, Townshend, brought forward a Militia Bill. Pitt took this occasion of responding to Fox's challenge by unfolding a plan of his own. No scheme, he said, could be carried out without the co-operation of the Government, the Army, the Law, and the country gentry. But he unfortunately came under none of these descriptions. He knew no secrets of Government; he had too early been driven from the profession of arms; he had never studied the law; he was no country gentleman.

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[1] Bedford Corr. ii. 180.

[2] Orford, ii. 86–97.

His plan was made the groundwork of a Bill, which occupied much time in the Commons, but was lost in the Lords.

It provided for an infantry militia of fifty or sixty thousand men, to be summoned compulsorily by the civil power: to be exercised twice a week, one of these days to be Sunday, if the clergy did not raise too much objection. It was to have the same pay as the infantry, but plain clothing, 'not pretending to all the lustre of the army.' The non-commissioned officers were to be private soldiers, not fewer than four to every eighty men.

What millions, he said, would have been saved by such a force during the last thirty years! And what an inglorious picture for this country, to figure gentlemen driven by an invasion like a flock of sheep, and forced to send money abroad to buy courage and defence! If this scheme should prove oppressive, provincially or parochially, he was willing to give it up. But surely it was preferable to waiting to see if the wind would blow you subsidiary troops. These, always an eyesore, you would never want again if this Bill were passed. This speech marked another step forward in Pitt's career; for he opened his plan with a plain precision, a mastery of detail, and a business-like clearness the House had not expected from him. 'He had never shone in this light before.'[1]

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[1] Orford, ii. 98–101.

Dec. 10, 1755. Two days later, again the treaties were discussed in both Houses.

The debate in the Lords does not concern us. It was spirited and bitter. Temple raised the storm, while the future George III. sate and took notes. In the Commons there was a new feature. Newcastle, doubtful of the zeal of Fox and Murray on his behalf, had retained for his defence Hume Campbell, the brother of Marchmont; with the Paymastership as a retaining fee, had not Fox, who always had his eye on this lucrative place, vetoed the appointment.[1] Walpole describes the new gladiator as eloquent, acute, abusive, corrupt, insatiable. To this accumulation of epithets we need and can add nothing. He had been in opposition with Pitt, and had had a brush with him already, but had almost given up attendance in Parliament.

Hume Campbell, raised to this bad eminence, seems to have acquitted himself ably in his opening attack, and to have delivered a masterly speech. He could see no reason, he said, why gentlemen were suffered to come every day to the House merely to threaten and arraign the conduct of their superiors. Such behaviour was unparliamentary and unprecedented. 'Let the House punish,' he said, 'these eternal invectives.' Pitt angrily called him to order for so describing the debates of that House. Horace Walpole, the elder, said, with some reason, that Pitt ought to be the last man in the House to complain of irregularity. Pitt declared that Campbell's words struck directly at the liberty of debate; that he had a mind to move to have the words taken down, but would refrain till the orator had explained himself. Campbell then proceeded with his discourse. He was followed by other speakers, Murray delivering a fine argument in defence of the treaties. Pitt, meanwhile, contrary to his habit, possessed himself in silence, collecting all his powers for his reply. When he arose he delivered one that was memorable and overwhelming. 'You never heard such a philippic as Pitt returned. Hume Campbell was annihilated. Pitt, like an angry wasp, seems to have left his sting in the wound, and has since assumed a style of delicate ridicule and repartee. But think how charming a ridicule must be that lasts and rises, flash after flash, for an hour and a half! Some day perhaps you will see some of the glittering splinters that I gathered up.'

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[1] Orford, ii. 107.

So wrote Horace Walpole in the first enthusiasm produced by this effort. But the more deliberate record in his memoirs reveals few of the flashing splinters that he thought to have garnered. Luckily, Sir William Meredith has left a very brief account[1] of the tilt between Campbell and Pitt, which we can collate with Walpole's.

So slight had been the defence, said Pitt, that he did not know how to deal with it; only little shifts or evasions worthy of a pie-poudre court, but not of Parliament. As for Hume Campbell, he had him in his power, he could bring him to his knees at the bar of the House as a delinquent for such an assault on the privileges of Parliament. If members were to be threatened for speaking with freedom of Ministers, all liberty of debate would be at an end. As he revered the profession of the law, so he grieved to hear it dishonoured by language that fixed an indelible blot on him that spoke it. 'Superior' was a word that he disdained. That hon. gentleman might indeed have his superiors. But he knew that when sitting, speaking, and voting in his legislative capacity the King himself was not his superior. And he could assure the hon. gentleman that such freedom in speaking of ministers was neither unparliamentary nor unprecedented. For even in the profligate prerogative reign of James I., when a great duke, as now, monopolised power, the House of Commons possessed an honest member who dared to call that duke *stellionatus*, a beast of most hideous deformity, covered with blurs and blotches and filth, an ideal monster, fouler than exists in nature. Yet a grave and venerable member of parliament thought this no unfit comparison for that great duke, who no doubt had his slaves all about him who called him Superior, yet durst not bring such language into the House of Commons. And we had then a wretched King who would have been glad of the assistance of a great lawyer, could he have one to have threatened a member of parliament for exposing the arbitrary and pernicious designs that he was carrying on by his ministers against his people. Thank God! we had no such King. If we had, he would not want a slavish lawyer to abet the worst measures that can be devised to ruin and enslave this country.

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[1] Holland House MSS.

'But I will not dress up this image under a third person,' he exclaimed, turning full round and facing Hume Campbell, 'I apply it to him; his is the servile doctrine; he is the slave; and the shame of his doctrine will stick to him as long as his gown sticks to his back. After all, his trade is words; they were not provoked by me, but they have no terrors for me, they provoke only my ridicule and contempt.'

Then turning to Murray, he denounced the treaties as a violation of the Act of Settlement. The article to which, it may be presumed, he referred was as follows:

'That in case the Crown and Imperial Dignity of this realm shall hereafter come to any person, not being a native of this Kingdom of England, this nation be not obliged to engage in any war for the defence of any dominions or territories which do not belong to the Crown of England without the consent of Parliament.'

It cannot be said that this enactment had been specially present to the mind of George II. at any period of his reign. Murray had defended the treaties thinly against the charge of infringement by declaring that if this treaty violated the Act of Settlement all our defensive treaties had done the same, and had ended by the quaint and almost cynical remark that 'we could not enjoy the blessing of the present Royal Family without the inconveniences.'

Pitt can have had, and in fact had, but little difficulty in dealing with Murray. 'It is difficult to know where to pull the first thread from a piece so finely spun. Constructions ought never to condemn a great minister, but I think this crime of violating the Act of Settlement is within the letter. If the dangerous illegality of this is to be inquired into, it should be referred to a committee of the whole House, not to a Committee of Supply. Inquired into it must be, for I will not suffer an audacious minister to escape the judgment of Parliament. For if a Cabinet have taken upon them to conclude treaties of subsidy without the consent of Parliament, shall they not answer for their action?'

He derided Murray's precedents. For in 1717 or 1718 Ministers stated that there was danger to be apprehended from Sweden, and then asked for money. Would any lawyer plead that when his Britannic Majesty speaks of dominions in a treaty, he can mean any but his British dominions? We were not to be explained out of our liberties.

He then criticised the conduct of the Hessians in the last war; except on one occasion, when they were forced at Munich, they had not behaved well.

There Horace Walpole's notes branch off into a tangle of headings and exclamations which it is difficult and unnecessary to unravel. Pitt emphatically denied that the Crown had a power of concluding treaties of subsidy that led to war. He was sorry to hear it avowed that Hanover was concerned in all the treaties which had been cited. It was clearly a time to make a stand, now that we had arrived at that pitch of adulation that we were ready to declare openly that Hanover was at the back of all. He wished that the circumstances of this country would enable us to extend this protecting care to Hanover, but they would not. For no consideration would he have set his hand to these treaties.

Fox in reply defended Hume Campbell with spirit, and made ironical retorts to Pitt, some of them now obscure, none of them now pertinent to this narrative. Such speeches become trivial within forty-eight hours of their delivery. The bones of Pitt's preserved by Walpole scarcely claim any better right of survival. To tell the bare truth, what survives of these debates is incomparably tedious and confused. But it is evident that Pitt had amazed the House by disclosing a new weapon, the power of ridicule. 'His antagonists endeavoured to disarm him. But as fast as they deprive him of one weapon, he finds a better. I never suspected him of such an universal armoury; I knew he had a Gorgon's head, composed of bayonets and pistols, but little thought that he could tickle to death with a feather.'

Whatever the relative arguments may have been, the legions were faithful, and voted the treaties by 318 to 126.

On December 12 the general engagement on the 1755. treaties was renewed, when Barrington brought them forward in Committee, and Charles Townshend distinguished himself by a speech which, Pitt declared, displayed such abilities as had not appeared since that House was a House. He himself spoke at length, but poorly and languidly, not deigning to answer Hume Campbell, who once more appeared, with manner and matter both 'flat and mean.'

Pitt said, in the few sentences into which Walpole condenses his speech, that he did not pretend to eloquence, but owed all his credit to the indulgence of the House. He looked with respect on the King's prejudices, he added with the finesse of a courtier or the irony of a foe, and with contempt on those who encouraged them. Was everything to be called invective that had not the smoothness of a court compliment? Old Horace Walpole had said that if one spoke against Hanover it might cause a rebellion. That was the chatter of a boarding-school miss. Lord Townshend and Sir Robert Walpole had withstood

Hanover. ‘Sir Robert thought well of me, died in peace with me. He was a truly English minister, and kept a strict hand on the Closet; when he was removed the door was flung open (to dangerous advisers?). His friends and followers had then transferred themselves to that minister, Lord Granville, who transplanted (*sic*) that English minister. Even Sir Robert's own reverend brother has gone over to the Hanoverian party!’

Fox merely tried in reply to keep Pitt at bay, so he said little of the treaties, but seems to have attacked his rival with some acrimony. He recalled all the treasonable songs and pamphlets of the former Opposition, all directed by Pitt, no doubt for the good of the country! But he could never forgive any man who had the heart to conceive, the head to contrive, and the hand to execute so much mischief. ‘The right honourable gentleman professes pride at acting with some here; I am proud of acting with so many! But because he wishes that Hanover should be separated from England, is it wise to act as if it were already separated?’

The legions once more prevailed, and approved both treaties by 289 to 121.

If Pitt was held to have been below himself in this debate, he was considered to have surpassed himself, when Dec. 15, 1755. the treaties came up on report three days afterwards, in a speech ‘of most admirable and ready wit that flashed from him for the space of an hour and a half, accompanied with action that would have added reputation to Garrick.’ He denounced Murray for attempting to hide the points at issue in a cloud of words. But in fact these treaties from simple questions had become all things to all men, as a conjuror plays with a pack of cards, passing them in turn to each spectator, receiving and keeping the money of all. Then he turned to Russia. 'Let us consider this Northern Star, that will not shine with any light of its own, but requires to be rubbed up into lustre; for could Russia, without our assistance, support her own troops? She will not prove a Star of the Wise Men, yet they must approach her with presents. The real Wise Man "Quæ desperat tractata nitescere posse relinquit."

'By this measure you are throwing Prussia into the arms of France. What can Frederick answer if France proposes to march an army into Germany? If he refuses to join her will she not threaten to leave him at the mercy of Russia? This is one of the effects of our sage negotiations—not to mention that we have wasted ten or eleven millions in subsidies.

'Shall we not set the impossibility of our carrying on so extensive a war against the contention that his Majesty's honour is engaged? Our Ministers foresaw our ill-success at sea, and prudently laid a nest-egg for a war on the Continent. We have as an inducement to engage in this war been referred to the examples of Greece and Carthage. These ancient histories, no doubt, furnish ample matter for declamation. It is long since I read them, but I think I recollect enough to show how inapplicable they are to our present circumstances. Suppose Thebes and Sparta and the other Greek Commonwealths fallen from their former power, would Athens have gone on alone and paid all the rest? No, Athens put herself on board her fleet to fight where she could be superior, and so recovered her land.'

'Not giving succour to Hannibal was indeed wrong, because he was already on land and was successful, and might have done something of the kind that Prince Eugene proposed, and marched with a torch to Versailles. But another poet says, I recollect a good deal of poetry to-day, another poet says, "Expende Hannibalem," "weigh him, weigh him." I have weighed him. What good did his glory procure to his country? Remember what the same poet says: "I, demens, curre per Alpes, ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias."'

This flight, it may be surmised, was aimed at Cumberland.

He once more expressed his dutiful feelings to the King, and acknowledged how difficult it was for Ministers to be honest with him. But yet the resistance to these treaties might save us from a Continental war. In any case, speaking for himself, he would never again give his confidence in the nation's advisers or adopters of this measure. He could only hope that our perverted Ministers might yet yield to conviction and save us, and that a British spirit might influence British councils.

In the division which followed, the Hessian treaty appeared somewhat less acceptable than the Russian. The former was voted by 259 to 72 and the latter by 263 to 69. This was the net result. Yet, as Horace Walpole wrote at the time, 'Pitt had ridden in the whirlwind and directed the storm with abilities beyond the common reach of the genii of the tempest.' Eloquence, reason, and argument avail little against a compact parliamentary majority.[1]

The reader will scarcely regret that an adjournment for Christmas followed this debate, for nothing is so tantalising as these barren husks of great speeches. The Minister employed his holiday appropriately in distributing gifts of office to his friends, and the reconstruction of the Government was completed. No part of it directly touches our story, but some features are of interest. The Dukes of Newcastle and Bedford, the Chancellor and Fox were each allowed to nominate a member of the Board of Trade. But Newcastle would not allow Fox a single voice in the appointment of the Lords of the Treasury; for he guarded that department with the jealousy of a Turk. The other point of interest was the cost to the public of these manipulations. To get rid of Sir Thomas Robinson it had been necessary to settle a pension on him of 2000*l.* a year for thirty-one years. To make a place for Lord Hillsborough, Mr. Arundel had a pension of 2000*l.* in exchange for the sinecure office of Treasurer of the Chamber. Lord Lothian had 1200*l.* a year to vacate the Clerk Registership of Scotland for Hume Campbell. Lord Cholmondeley, who held the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland with one colleague, had 600*l.* a year to induce him to accept a third partner of the office. Sir Conyers Darcy had 1600*l.* a year for vacating the Comptrollership of the Household. In all a burden of 7400*l.* a year was settled on the public to patch up a feeble and odious Ministry for ten months.

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[1] Orford, ii. 135-9.

While the gentle showers of office and pensions were descending on parched politicians, Pitt wended his valetudinarian way, as usual, to Bath. But when Parliament met in January, he was in his place, alert and thirsting for combat.

1756. We first catch a glimpse of him, on January 23, paying great court to Beckford; with conspicuous success as it happened, for Beckford hereafter was to be his devoted follower, and his invaluable agent in the City of London. On the same day the new Chancellor of the Exchequer unfolded his Budget, better than was expected, but bewildered with the figures. 'He stumbled over millions, and dwelt pompously over farthings.' His Budget dealt with figures enviably small; duties on plate, calculated to produce 30,000*l.* a year, which produced 18,000*l.*; on bricks and tiles which were to produce 30,000*l.* a year, and on cards and dice which were to produce 17,000*l.* Bricks and tiles failed the Government; the tax was too unpopular; so, it is scarcely necessary to state, it was moved on to ale-houses. A generation, which passes tens of millions of expenditure without breaking silence, looks back with awe on that which deployed the full splendour of eloquence on taxes which altogether were not to produce 80,000*l.* a year. Pitt, who was almost as ignorant of finance as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, attacked him with vigour, but Lyttelton replied effectively. In speaking he mentioned Pitt as his friend, but corrected it to 'the gentleman.' This raised a laugh, when Lyttelton remarked, not without pathos, 'If he is not my friend, it is not my fault,' and the contest, after lasting some time, mellowed into good humour.

Jan. 28, 1756. A few days later Pitt broke out again and declared that the Ministry was disjointed, and united only in corrupt and arbitrary measures. Fox denied this publicly and privately; publicly sneering at Pitt's family connection, privately assuring Pitt that, so far from there being any disunion between Newcastle and himself, the two Townshends had offered to join the Duke if he would give up Fox, and that the Minister had refused them.

Feb. 9, 1756. The next battle was on a proposal to raise four Swiss battalions to be employed in America, when Pitt, as usual, censured the dilatoriness of the Government and flouted their 'paper' forces. Lord Loudoun commanded only a scroll, he said; the suggested battalions were only adding paper to paper; and so forth. Feb. 10, 1756. Next day he diverted the debate from its tedious course by accusing the Government of having cashiered a brave officer, Sir Henry Erskine, a friend of Bute's by the by, on account of his vote in Parliament. But this ended in nothing.

Feb. 20, 1756. At a later stage, Pitt ironically described the plan for the Swiss auxiliaries as a fortuitous blessing, for had not Prevot, the adventurer who was to command the battalions, been taken prisoner by the French and found his way from Brest hither, and had he not then taken it into his head that he would like to command a regiment, nothing would have been heard of it. He hoped this Ulysses-like wanderer might be as wise as his prototype and so forth; one can imagine the sort of pleasantry. But it was Charles Townshend who, 'content with promoting confusion,' chiefly shone at this time. On the other hand, one of Pitt's speeches, urging that the Colonies should be heard on this Swiss scheme, is described as lasting an hour and a half without fire or force. Indeed, Walpole writes of this debate that 'the opposition neither increase in numbers or eloquence; the want of the former seems to have damped the fire of the latter,' and that 'the House of Commons has dwindled into a very dialogue between Pitt and Fox . . . . in which, though Pitt has attacked, Fox has generally had the better.' Pitt seemed to be becoming dull and diffuse. 'Mr. Pitt talks by Shrewsbury clock, and is grown almost as little heard as that is at Westminster.' Still one wishes that the chronicler had reported the speeches of either as faithfully as he reports his own.

The apprehension of a French invasion, which had been present for months, became acute in March and April (1756). The Government asked for the troops which Holland was, it was held, bound to furnish, and they were refused. Thereupon Lord George Sackville, probably by concert with the Court or to gain its favour, suggested a preference for Hanoverians, whose soldier-like qualities he commended. The hint was acted upon with suspicious promptitude; and on March 29, Fox formally moved to address the King to send for his Electoral troops.[1]

Pitt, swathed as an invalid, opposed the motion in a long speech. He alleged his respect for the King as the ground of his opposition. For this address would be advice to the King in his Electoral capacity which we had no claim to offer, and which, moreover, might involve his Electorate in a peril equal to our own. He seems to have argued against any fear of invasion, on the ground that in the Dutch war, with a suspected King, we had coped with Holland and France; that in 1690, when the French had beaten our fleet at Beachy Head and had an army actually in Ireland, we had surmounted that danger; and that de Witt, the greatest man since the men of Plutarch, had proposed an invasion to d'Estrades, who had treated it as a chimerical suggestion. In any case the natural force of the nation was sufficient to repel any attack of the enemy. That state alone is a sovereign state 'qui suis stat viribus, non alieno pendet arbitrio,' which subsists by its own strength, not by the courtesy of its neighbours:[1] words which may have inspired Lord Lyndhurst, a century afterwards, with his famous phrase with regard to a State existing on sufferance. He would vote, Pitt proceeded, for raising any numbers of British troops. The late war had formed many great officers, and he would not interpose foreigners to hinder their promotion; nor would he force this vote on the King when he might send for his troops without.[2] The motion was agreed to by 259 to 92. Bubb comically commented on the readiness of the King, who had then amassed, it was believed, an immense treasure in Hanover, to make the nation pay for this defence of himself, by declaring that 'His Majesty would not for the world lend himself a farthing.' Not less humorous is the story preserved by Horace Walpole that the night the Hanoverian troops were voted, he summoned his German cook and ordered himself an exceptionally good supper. 'Get me all de varieties,' said the homely monarch, 'I don't mind expense.' A lampoon in the form of an anecdote, it is to be supposed.

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[1] Orford says that Sackville moved for them on April 29. The Parliamentary History says that Fox moved for them on March 29 (xv. 702).

Next day Pitt had another opportunity for attack on the charge involved by the employment of Hessian troops, who, he declared, would cost 400,000*l.* more than the same number of British troops. But, a few days afterwards, March 30, 1756.

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[1] Parl. Hist. xv. 702.

[2] Orford, ii. 185–6.

there was a still better occasion, when Barrington brought forward the estimate for the Hanoverian troops, and commended it as a better bargain than the Hessian, which had been passed, and was therefore secure. Pitt at once harped on the same strain, and, lauding the Hanoverian estimate, fell still more vehemently on the Hessian. No one could find fault with the Hanoverian, that we owed to His Majesty; but the subsidiary juggle with Hesse was the work of his Ministers. 'Nothing but good flows from the King; nothing but ruin from his servants. I choose that they shall fall by a friendly hand, and that the condemnation of his patrons should come from the noble lord himself (Barrington). But must we engage mercenaries because France does? She engages them,' he said, with one of his phrases of picturesque energy, 'because she has not blood enough in her own veins for the purpose of universal monarchy.' He despaired of preserving Minorca, he continued with gloomy prescience, yet the waste on these Hessians would have saved that island, would have conquered America. He broke out bitterly against the departmental character of the Government. 'I don't call this an administration, it is so unsteady. One is at the head of the Treasury; one, Chancellor; one, head of the Navy; one great person, of the Army. But is that an administration? They shift and shuffle the charge from one to another. One says, "I am not the General;" the Treasury says, "I am not the Admiral;" the Admiralty says, "I am not the Minister." From such an unaccording assemblage of separate and distinct powers with no system, a nullity results. One, two, three, four, five lords meet. If they cannot agree, "Oh, we will meet again on Saturday!"

"Oh," but says one of them, "I am to go out of town." Alas! when no parties survive to thwart them, what an aggravation it is that no good comes from such unanimity!'

Fox, in reply, asked if Pitt wished to see a sole Minister, a question that suggests that there was already an impression abroad that Pitt was aiming at the dictatorship which he afterwards received, or else that Pitt, if he obtained office, would be so overbearing as to become the sole Minister.

Pitt, at any rate, did not accept the allusion as to himself. He said that he did not wish to see a single Minister, but system and decision. Indeed, he gracefully added, were Fox sole Minister there would be decision enough.[1]

On May 11 (1756) a royal message apprised Parliament of the treaty concluded with Prussia (the Convention of Westminster, signed January 1756), and asking his faithful Commons for supplies.

The House promptly voted a million on account, but Pitt as usual uttered eloquent lamentations on the incapacity of Ministers and the calamitous situation of affairs. What was this vote of credit for? Was it to raise more men? We had already 40,000 British and 14,000 foreign troops. Was it for the purpose of marine treaties? Then he would joyfully vote it. For a naval war we could and ought to support, but a Continental war on the present system we could not. Regard should no doubt be had to Hanover, but a secondary regard. For if Hanover was to be our first object it would lead us to bankruptcy. It was impossible to defend Hanover by subsidies. How could an open country be defended against an enemy who could march 150,000 men into it, and if necessary reinforce them by as many more? Should Hanover suffer by her connection with Great Britain, we ought not to make peace without exacting full and ample compensation for all the damage and injury she might have sustained. But the idea of defending Hanover by subsidies was preposterous, absurd, and impracticable. Then, excited by this favourite theme beyond the limits he had imposed on himself, he struck home at the King and his darling patrimony. This system, he said, would in a few years, cost us more money than the fee simple of the electorate was worth, a place which after all could not be found in the map. He ardently wished us to break those fetters which chained us like Prometheus to that barren rock. (The metaphor which made a rock of Hanover does not strike one as one of his happiest efforts).

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[1] Orford, ii. 188–90.

If Lyttelton could not state the purpose for which this credit was designed, perhaps he could say for what it was not designed. Still, Pitt added sardonically, he was of so compounding a temper that he should assent to it.

Ministers bragged of their unanimity and spirit. But what had all this army of councils and talents, this universal aye, produced? Were we safe? Had we inflicted any damage on the enemy? If so, when and where?

He had no particular pleasure in thus speaking. He did not wish to load the unhappy men who had undone their country, most unhappy if they did not realise it. And our activity! Philosophers indeed had a phrase *vis inertiæ* by which they denoted the inactivity of action (*sic*). Was it by that that we were to be saved?

His charge against the Government was this: that we had provoked before we could defend, and neglected after provocation; that we were left inferior to France in every quarter; that the vote of credit had been misapplied to secure Hanover; and that we had bought a treaty with Prussia by sacrificing our rights. He would not have signed such a treaty to have the five great places of those who had signed it. Yet if this treaty were restrained to the defence of the King's dominions he should not know how to oppose it.

He had no feeling of resentment against the Government, no one had injured him. Yet he could not but think ill of their capacity and their measures. Could he, then, every day, arraign their policy and feel confidence in them? Pelham indeed had intended economy, but he was dragged into this foreign policy by his brother, now at the head of the Treasury. And if he, Pitt, saw Newcastle like a child driving a go-cart with that precious freight of an old King and his family on to a precipice, was he not bound to try and take the reins from his hands? And with a gloomy foreboding which must have chilled the anxious House, he solemnly prayed that the King might not have Minorca written on his heart, as Calais had been, in the dying declaration of Mary, engraved on hers.

The debate ended with a bitter rally between Pitt and Lyttelton, the fiercer for their former friendship. Lyttelton had sneered at his epithets. This came well, said Pitt, from Lyttelton, whose own character was a composition of epithets. He himself had used no epithets that day, so Lyttelton had chosen ill the occasion for his taunt. But in any case the House was not an academy for the exchange of compliments. And when Lyttelton disclaimed any share in framing the motion, it was obvious that he was not at liberty to change it. If Lyttelton would declare that he had no more resources, he would only say that Lyttelton was incapable.

The new Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose heart was still warm with his old affection, was hurt by this attack, but he maintained his ground. 'He says I am but a thing made up of epithets. Is not this the language of Billingsgate? The world is complaining that the House was turned into a bear garden. I do not envy my friend the glory of being the Figg or Broughton of it.' Pitt retorted that Lyttelton was a very pretty poet, and that there was no one whom he more respected pen in hand. 'But it is hard that my friend, with whom I have taken sweet counsel in epithets, should now reproach me with using them.' Lyttelton replied once more that it was not his fault if he and Pitt were not still friends.[1]

May 14, 1756. A day or two later Lyttelton unfolded to the House the provisions of the Treaty of Westminster. It had cleared up some small pecuniary claims on both sides, so much to Frederick for losses from British privateers, so much from Frederick for arrears of interest on the Silesian loan, a balance of 40,000*l.* due on the whole to Great Britain. On this, Pitt, inveterate against the Ministry, fulminated once more. He declared that by payment, even of a small sum, we had conceded the principle of our Empire over the sea, and went off into the usual rhetoric. 'For himself he should affect no superiority but what was common to him with the twelve millions of his countrymen, innocence of his country's ruin, the superiority of the undone over the undoers.'

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[1] Orford, ii. 193–7.

All that is notable in these crumbs of debate is the strategy of Pitt; to hammer at the enemy without ceasing, not to allow him a moment to breathe or recover, but to display him to the country day and night pummelled, bewildered and helpless, until he should succumb from exhaustion; when the country should insist on the removal of the defeated combatant, and the substitution of his conqueror. Pitt was openly set on the destruction of the Newcastle Government for more reasons than one. He was vindictive and had been slighted; he was profoundly anxious about the position of the country, and convinced of the incapacity of Newcastle to govern; he wished to try his own hand at the game, believing that he could do better, convinced that he could do no worse, than the Ministers whom he had seen at work.

CHAPTER XXI.

BUT national calamity was now to lend irresistible force to his attacks. It had been known for some time that France was meditating an attack on Gibraltar or Minorca, and in the beginning of March it became certain that Minorca was to be the object.[1] During the first week of May the Government received the news that the French had actually landed on the island. War was formally and not prematurely declared on May 18. Six weeks earlier the ill-fated Byng had sailed with a fleet to relieve the fortress. The country waited for news with bated breath. The King declared that he could neither eat nor sleep. Saunders, afterwards to be Pitt's First Lord of the Admiralty, reassured his Sovereign by saying that they should screw his heart out if Byng were not at that moment (June 7) in the harbour of Mahon.[2] Then came the news that Byng, after an indecisive engagement with the French fleet, had sailed back to Gibraltar and left Minorca to its fate. Still the nation, though raging against Byng, hoped against hope, till on July 14 the news came that Fort St. Philip, the British fort, had surrendered after a gallant defence on June 28, and that Minorca was in the hands of the French. The long-compressed anxiety exploded in a terrible outburst of wrath against Byng. Addresses poured in from every part of England demanding vengeance upon him. The unhappy Admiral was brought back to Greenwich Hospital as a prisoner to await a court-martial. But the nation had already turned its thumb downwards. Perhaps the best idea of the popular sentiment is conveyed by the fact that Byng's brother, who went to meet the Admiral, was stricken to death by the popular fury wherever he passed; so that he fell ill at the first sight of the prisoner, and died next day in convulsions. There was no chance of a fair trial for the unhappy man. To the merchants of London bringing one of the addresses for his exemplary punishment Newcastle, not sorry to have a scapegoat, had blurted out, 'Oh! indeed he shall be tried immediately: he shall be hanged directly.' And executed he was, after an agony of eight months, in spite of justice, in spite of Pitt, who had the fine courage to support him, in deference to the nation and the King who were bent on his death. Voltaire, who had tried with real humanity to save him, sardonically described the execution in Candide, 'Dans ce pays-ci il est bon de tuer de temps en temps un amiral pour encourager les autres,' a phrase which he appears to have borrowed from the Knights of Malta.[1]

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[1] The Consul at Genoa had warned Newcastle early in February that a surprise attack on Minorca was meditated. Mr. Corbett, who states this, (England in the Seven Years War, i. 97) excuses Newcastle for neglecting the information, one does not see why. More attention was paid to an intercepted despatch of the Swedish minister at Paris, dated February 25, 1756.

[2] Walpole to Chute, June 8, 1756.

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[1] 'So also we find it recorded during the siege of Malta, that some hesitation having displayed itself on the part of the slaves in exposing themselves, during their pioneering labours, to a fire more than ordinarily deadly, the Grand Master directed some to be hanged and others to have their ears cut off, "pour encourager les autres" as the chroniclers quaintly and simply record.' Porter's 'History of the Knights of Malta,' ii. 272.

Something less, much less than Nelson, might have saved Minorca. The truth seems to be that Byng, who was personally brave, sailed from Gibraltar with the preconceived impression that Minorca was lost, and acted throughout under this conviction, without energy or resource. So far as his countrymen, or rather, their rulers, were concerned, they had long done their best to lose it. They had, in spite of constant appeals, starved and neglected it. But there was worse than this. On one side of the mouth of the harbour of Mahon is a site easily rendered impregnable, on the other a plain which nothing can secure. John Duke of Argyle had begun a fort on the first site, but Lord Cadogan out of hatred to him, it was said, destroyed it and built Fort St. Philip at a vast expense on the second. The thing is incredible to the traveller who sees the place. If the story be true (Horace Walpole is the authority), it is on the head of Cadogan and not of Byng that should be laid the loss of Minorca, a loss which can neither be forgotten nor forgiven.

This tragic incident only touches Pitt's life in so far as it precipitated the disgrace of Newcastle. The Duke was indeed getting deeper and deeper. In May he declared that no one blamed him, for every one knew that the sea was not his province, and Fox had replied that as to public censure, his information was exactly the reverse. In September he could scarcely conceal from himself that he was being mobbed and pelted in his coach, and that his coachman was urged by the shouting crowd to drive his Grace straight to the Tower. Ballads swarmed of which the burden was, 'To the block with Newcastle and to the yard-arm with Byng.' Even the docile allegiance of the

House of Commons can scarcely have allayed the veteran's rising anxiety. 'This was the year of the worst administration that I have seen in England,' says Walpole, though he was the close friend of Fox, 'for now Newcastle's incapacity was allowed full play.' Fox indeed found that he was not admitted to real confidence or to the counsels of Newcastle and Hardwicke. He was therefore in a state of swelling discontent, ready to break away at the first opportunity. He declared that he had urged that a strong squadron should be sent for the relief of the fortress during the first week of March, but was overruled. The fall of Minorca and the storm of national fury which followed increased his anxiety to be out of this disastrous Ministry. He was, we suspect, already determined not to meet Parliament again as Newcastle's talking puppet, possibly his scapegoat.

The House had risen on May 27. Two days earlier occurred an event which was to remove one of the three intellects of the Government, Fox and Hardwicke, of course, being the other two. Ryder, the Chief Justice of the King's Bench, died, and Murray at once laid claim to the succession. This demand drove Newcastle to despair. He offered Murray exorbitant and increasing terms to remain, for he regarded Murray as his sole protector in the House of Commons against his doubtful friend, Fox, and his open enemy, Pitt. But offers of the Duchy of Lancaster for life with a pension of 2000*l.* a year, with permission to remain Attorney-General at a salary of 7000*l.* a year, and a reversion of one of the Golden Tellerships of the Exchequer for his nephew Stormont, left Murray unmoved. For months the game of temptation was played. At the beginning of

October the Prime Minister had raised the proposed pension to 6000*l.* a year. Murray remained firm. He stipulated, indeed, for more than the Chief Justiceship; he demanded a peerage as well; he would not take the one without the other; and in no case would he remain Attorney-General. We can imagine Newcastle's tears and caresses; they were in vain. Vain, too, was his attempt to fob off his rebellious subordinate with the reluctance of the King. Murray, indeed, hinted that when he became a private member of the House of Commons he might go into Opposition. We may be sure, at any rate, that he had no intention of facing an angry nation and Parliament in defence of Newcastle and the loss of Minorca. This hint probably clinched the matter. Newcastle capitulated; though, said Fox, from 'wilful trifling,' he deferred the performance of his promise as long as possible.[1] It was not till the eve of the Duke's fall that, on November 8, Murray was sworn in as Chief Justice and created a Peer as Lord Mansfield.

What glimpses are there meanwhile of Pitt? He had 1756. just got possession of Hayes, and was there in May, building and improving, as usual, but speaking brilliantly on the Militia Bill in the House, so brilliantly as to earn a patronising note of approval from Bute, beginning 'My worthy friend'; an indication that the bond between Pitt and the young Court was now close. Indeed, Pitt seems now to have been the principal adviser of that increasingly powerful connection.

Potter, whom Pitt had come to describe as 'one of the best friends I have in the world,' wrote to Pitt, ten days after Ryder's death, conveying the news from an inspired source that if Murray went on the bench Newcastle would invite Pitt to join the Government, for he could repair the loss in no other way. But he adds, shrewdly enough, that the Duke was evidently ignorant of his own strength, for if he had to rely on Lyttelton and Dupplin (then Joint Paymaster of the Forces) alone, though the debates would no doubt be shorter, he would not, such was the temper of the House, lose a single vote. He added that, in his judgment, the Opposition had not made themselves popular by their conduct, because of the fear of invasion. Hanover treaties and Hanover troops had become popular; opposition to them must be wrong 'when we are ready to be eat up by the French.'[1]

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[1] Fox to Ellis, July 12, 1756. Holland House MSS.

But these anticipations were premature, for the struggle with Murray lasted, as we have seen, from May till November. So that Pitt had leisure to squander on his improvements and to receive his eldest son John on John's entrance into the world. But his eye was vigilantly fixed on the distresses of the country. 'Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?' he writes to George Grenville (June 5, 1756). 'It is an inadequate and a selfish consolation, but it is a sensible one, to think that we share only in the common ruin, and not in the guilt of having left us exposed to the natural and necessary consequences of administration without ability or virtue.' Grenville, determined not to be undone, replies in a letter stuffed with Latin quotation. 'Distress,' rejoins Pitt (June 16, 1756), 'infinite distress seems to hem us in on all quarters. I am in most anxious impatience to have the affair in the Mediterranean cleared up. As yet nothing is clear but that the French are masters there, and that probably many an innocent and gallant man's honour and fortune is to be offered up as a scapegoat for the sins of the Administration.' In July he paid a visit at Stowe, and in August he was laid up at Hayes with 'a very awkward, uneasy, but not hurtful' malady.

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[1] Chatham Corr. i. 158.

He must have seen with poignant interest Frederick's fierce irruption into Saxony, but all seems absorbed in his anxiety for his wife and his overflowing delight at the birth of his son. This event occurred on October 10, at a moment when the ministerial crisis had become acute.

No one in fact was willing to face even an abject House of Commons with the loss of Minorca on his back. Newcastle was near the end of his tether. Murray had gone. Whether Chief Justice or not, he was determined to be out of the Ministry; and if disappointed of his just claim to the Bench he was not likely to face a storm on behalf of the Minister who had refused it. Murray had gone, Fox was going; for his chagrin was patent, and Newcastle 'treated him rather like an enemy whom he feared than as a minister whom he had chosen for his assistant.' He was no better used by the King. The Duke, moreover, was at war with the waxing power of Leicester House. With this Court indeed he managed to patch up a hollow peace at the expense of Fox; offending one Court and not appeasing the other. But that did not help him to an agent in the House of Commons.

And worse was still to come, disaster followed on disaster. To a nation freshly smarting with the fall of Minorca there came tidings of catastrophe from the East and the West. In June Calcutta had been captured by Surajah Dowlah, followed by the horrors of the Black Hole, which still linger in the proverbial dialect of this country. Then in August fell Oswego, the most important British fortress in North America. Situated on Lake Ontario it was a permanent menace to the French, for British command of that lake would mean the separation of Canada from Louisiana. Montcalm, a general of high merit, who has had the singular good fortune to leave a name consecrated by the common veneration of friend and foe, had arrived to take the command of the French forces in Canada. Two months after landing he marched on Oswego, and, investing it with a greatly superior force, soon compelled it to capitulate. Its garrison of 1400 men surrendered as prisoners of war.[1] A hundred pieces of artillery and great stores of ammunition fell into the hands of the French. The forts, three in number, and the vessels were burned. It was a real triumph for the French, and a proportionate disaster for their foes. 'Such a shocking affair has never found a place in English annals,' wrote one American officer. 'The loss is beyond account; but the dishonour done his Majesty's arms is infinitely greater.' 'Oswego,' wrote Horace Walpole, 'is of ten times more importance even than Minorca.'

Scarcely less consternation was caused in England, where the news arrived on September 30. People there were getting dazed with disaster, and the men who ruled became more and more abhorrent. Already, on September 2, Newcastle had written to the Chancellor that people were becoming outrageous in the North of

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[1] 'Montcalm and Wolfe,' i. 413.

England, and that a petition was being largely signed in Surrey demanding 'justice against persons however highly dignified or distinguished.' This, he adds drily, may mean you or me, or 'perhaps somebody more highly dignified and distinguished than either of us.'[1] Who could be found to bear such a burden of shame and ignominy, and affront the storm that threatened to burst at once in overwhelming popular fury?

Not Fox, undaunted though he might be. Like the condottiere that he was, he did not heed hard knocks provided the pay were good. But here he was defrauded of his deserts, of the promised confidence of the King and his Minister. For Newcastle had betrayed him to the last; the magpie cunning of that old caitiff paralysed every arm that might have defended him. When it came to the point he could not bring himself to part with his monopoly of patronage, and of power as he understood power. He was like a drowning miser with his treasure on him, who will not part with his gold to save his life. So the Duke preferred to sink with all his influence rather than take the chance of floating without it. First he set the King against Fox. The Duke had tried to appease Leicester House by getting the appointment of Groom of the Stole for Bute. The King, suspecting Bute's intimacy with the Princess, detested that fascinating courtier. So Newcastle, to divert from himself the King's wrath at having to make this nomination, told His Majesty that Fox made Bute's appointment a condition of his retaining the seals; and then without telling Fox that his name had thus been mentioned to the

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[1] Newcastle to Hardwicke, Sept. 2, 1756. Add. MSS. 35416.

Sovereign, informed him that the King was exasperated against him.[1]

Then there arose the eternal question of patronage. Fox had been promised by the King himself that on becoming Secretary of State he should have the conduct of the House of Commons with all that that involved. But Newcastle could not bring himself to fulfil the royal pledges or his own. When the list of the Prince of Wales's household was published, Fox saw in it the names of eight or ten members of Parliament as to whom he had never been even consulted. Newcastle moreover, as Fox asserted, broke a solemn promise that Fox's nephew, Lord Digby, should be included. A still greater affront was that he told Fox that he destined a vacant seat at the Board of Trade for a person whom he was not at liberty to mention. More than this, he took occasion to remind Fox of a former offer to make way for Pitt if it were for the King's service, and Fox again readily agreed. All this took place on September 30.[2] Such an insulting and accumulated want of confidence between the leaders of the two Houses was not to be tolerated, and Fox wrote at once to Bubb that things were going ill. The final explosion was caused by the exclusion of Digby, which was notified to Fox on October 5. The King, said the Duke, refused this nomination peremptorily and bitterly, but had said that, if the Duke himself pressed it, he would yield to oblige the Duke. On receiving this letter,

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[1] Fox to Kildare. This, an undated narrative among the Holland House MSS., seems to me the best statement from Fox's point of view. From Lord Kildare's reply it is evident that it was written and despatched towards the end of Nov. 1756.

[2] Narrative to Kildare.

Fox wrote a furious letter to Stone, Newcastle's secretary. The draft of a letter commonly reveals much more of the writer's mind than the letter itself, and the draft of this is fortunately preserved.[1] 'I do not know,' wrote Fox, 'whether I am to imagine from hence that the negotiation with Mr. Pitt is far advanced, but I am told it is not begun. In these circumstances, dear Sir, I must beg you to stop it. I retract all good-humoured dealing. I may be turned out, and I suppose shall. But I will not be used like a dog without having given the least provocation (suppose I should say with the utmost merit to those who use me so) and be like that dog a spaniel. I do not consent that Mr. Pitt should have my place, and promise to be in good humour or even on any terms with those who give it him.'[2] Fox was in a blind fury, but sensibly expunged all this from the letter he sent. To Welbore Ellis, his confidant, he wrote: 'The King has carried his displeasure to me beyond common bounds, and I vow to God I don't guess the reason. The Duke of Newcastle, instead of growing better, has outdone himself, and show'd me the Prince's establishment on which eight members of the House of Commons are plac'd whose names he never mention'd to me, and he had the assurance to make a merit of shewing me the List after it was *fix'd* with the King. He has been Fool enough to ask my consent, and to intend to offer my place to Mr. Pitt without (as I believe) trying whether or no he will accept it. This makes it necessary for me to take a step in which my view is to get out of court and never come into it again. . . . . If you think it worth while to get up very early to-morrow morning you may be at Holland House before I go to Lady Yarmouth, to desire and humbly advise H.M. to conclude the Treaty with Mr. Pitt, promising my assistance in a subaltern employment, and shewing the impossibility of my appearing and my determination not to appear in the H. of Commons as Secy. of State.'[1] While he was writing this, Newcastle was despatching a note giving way as to Digby's nomination,[2] with much the same effect as a cup of cold water poured with the best intentions on a burning city.

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[1] Fox to Stone, October 7, 1756. Holland House MSS.

[2] Ib.

Whether with or without the companionship of Ellis, Fox went straight to Lady Yarmouth. She was out. Newcastle had already sent her a note enclosing Fox's resignation, and assuring her that Fox was bringing it to her for transmission to the King.[3] When Fox found her, later in the day, and handed her his paper, she denied any idea of Pitt ever having been suggested to the King, but besought him to reconsider his determination. 'Monsieur Fox, vous êtes trop honnête homme pour quitter à présent. S'il y avait quatre ou cinq mois avant que le Parlement s'assemble; à la fin de la session vous ferez ce que vous voudrez, mais à présent de jeter tout en confusion! Regardez à la position des affaires. Non, je n'excuse pas le Duc de Newcastle; c'est dur, c'est pénible, mais quand vous aurez pensé un peu au Roi, à la patrie, vous continuerez cette session,' perhaps the only articulate utterance of Lady Yarmouth that we possess.[4] Failing in this, she begged at least that Granville might hand the resignation to the King instead of herself. Fox agreed to this.[1]

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[1] Fox to Ellis. H. H. MSS., Oct. 12, 1756.

[2] Newcastle to Fox, Oct. 12, 1756. H. H. MSS.

[3] Newcastle to Lady Yarmouth, Oct. 13. Add. MSS. 32868.

[4] Fox to Digby, Oct. 1756. Wingfield MSS. in Hist. MSS.

Fox's note to Newcastle was terse and sombre:

'My Lord, I return Your Grace many thanks for the letter which, not being at home, I did not receive till late last night, and I am much obliged to you for the contents of it.

'The step I am going to take is not only necessary but innocent. It shall be accompany'd with no complaint. It shall be follow'd by no resentment. I have no resentment. But it is not the less true that my situation is impracticable.'

To the King he sent a formal paper of grievance and resignation, which has already been printed and need not be repeated here. He took great pains over it, as the drafts testify. The substance of it was that he had been loyal to Newcastle, but that he had not received support in return, and so could not carry on the business of Government in the House of Commons as it should be carried on. But he would gladly serve the King outside the Cabinet. This meant that he would gladly exchange offices with Pitt. At the same time he told Cumberland and wrote to Devonshire that if Newcastle had been such a fool as to offer the seals to Pitt without knowing whether he would take them, he (Fox), to prevent the general confusion that would ensue, would continue for another session. No notice was taken of this offer.[2] It does not seem certain that it ever reached either Newcastle or the King.

Granville found the King prepared for the resignation,

[1] Orford, ii. 253.

[2] Narrative to Kildare.

and very angry with Fox for deserting him. 'Would you advise me to take Pitt?' he asked. 'Well, Sir!' replied Granville, 'you must take somebody.' 'Ah! but,' said the monarch, pensively, 'I am sure Pitt will not do my business.' The business to which the Sovereign referred was, of course, electoral. He considered that he had in various ways shown Fox great favour, and that Fox had acted ill in throwing up his office when the meeting of Parliament was near at hand.

Newcastle received Fox's resignation at the Treasury. Though he was planning to discard Fox for Pitt, he was thunderstruck at finding that Fox had anticipated him. He hurried to Court, and found the King in good humour except with the resigning Secretary. His Majesty gave Newcastle the paper which he had received from Granville, having underlined the passage which had mainly offended him: 'for want of support, and think it impracticable for me to carry on His Majesty's affairs as they ought to be carried on;' and then recited, with the aid of Newcastle as prompter, all the favours shown to Fox. But the more urgent and practical question was not the ingratitude of Fox, but what was to be done now that he had gone. The King, with that shrewd and redeeming touch of humour which we constantly discern in him, said that a sensible courtier, Lord Hyde, had told him that there were but three things to do. The King recited them thus: 'to call in Pitt, to make up with my own family, and, my lord, I have forgot the third.' The third probably related to Newcastle himself, and may therefore have been difficult of repetition to the Duke. But without hesitation the King empowered Newcastle to approach

Pitt, and to tell him that if he would take office he should have a good reception. Pitt was also to be offered the seals, but not at first, on the fatuous principle on which all Newcastle's negotiations were conducted; to hope against hope that the object he coveted could be got for much less than its value.

But then the King asked 'the great question . . . . which,' says Newcastle, 'I own I could not answer: what shall we do if Pitt will not come? Fox will then be worse.' Then the King, with still increasing acuteness, asked, 'Suppose Pitt will not serve with you?' 'Then, Sir, I must go.' And so it was to end. But Newcastle would not without a struggle renounce the deleterious habit of office. He summoned Hardwicke to town for the purpose of approaching Pitt. He hurried to Lady Yarmouth and took counsel with her. All agreed that the only resource was Pitt, and that Hardwicke alone could sound him. Pitt was at Hayes, but leaving immediately for Bath. Time was short, the crisis acute, so Newcastle wrote, 'don't boggle at it.'[1]

There was no boggling or hesitation on the part of the Chancellor: he hurried to London and saw Pitt on Tuesday, October 19. The interview lasted three hours and a half. When it was over, Hardwicke despatched a despairing note to Newcastle: 'I am just come from my conference, which lasted full 3½ hours. His answer is an absolute final negative without any reserve for further deliberation. In short there never was a more unsuccessful negotiator.'[2] In a longer letter to his son Lord

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[1] Newcastle to Hardwicke, Oct. 15, 1756. Harris, iii. 73.

[2] Hardwicke to Newcastle, Oct. 19, 1756. Add. MSS. 32868.

Royston, Hardwicke added but little more. On the main point Pitt was inexorable; he would have nothing to do with Newcastle. Hardwicke could not move him an inch. He was obdurate on 'men and measures.'[1] But 'men and measures' only meant Newcastle. Pitt had been repeatedly tricked by him; he had seen Fox repeatedly tricked by him when the meanest self-interest dictated honesty; he would not fall into the trap into which Fox had fallen; to join Newcastle now would be to be a willing dupe, and he was determined to govern if he was to govern, without this perpetual ambush at his side. Nor would he have any dealings with Fox. He thought, truly or untruly, that Fox had betrayed him, and he intended to try and do without treachery. He wished to enter on power clear of all suspicious connections, and indeed with little but the influence of his wife's family. So he resolved to see nothing even of Bute before meeting Hardwicke, and he summoned the Grenvilles to receive his report immediately after seeing Hardwicke.[2]

Pitt, however, having no access to the King and being anxious to communicate with him directly, made overtures elsewhere. On October 21, the palace was disturbed by an unwonted agitation. Pages and lackeys were seen in sudden perturbation calling to each other that Mr. Pitt had arrived to see my Lady Yarmouth. Lady Yarmouth's position was singular enough. She had once been the declared mistress of George the Second; 'My lady Yarmouth the comforter,' wrote a ribald wit.[3] She still lived under his roof, when it was her business to keep him amused, if possible, during the long dull evenings. But from being a favourite, she had developed into an institution. Her apartment, immediately below the King's, was little less than an office. There, it was said, peerages or bishoprics might sometimes be bought, and some patronage was perhaps facilitated or dispensed. On the other hand, Lord Walpole declared at an earlier period that she asked for nothing, and that one of her principal charms with the King was that she did not importune him for favours. At any rate, persons wanting anything did well to write to her. Thither, too, a circumstance of much significance, Ministers repaired before or after their audience with the King, to anticipate the royal disposition or to report the royal utterances. 'I went below stairs,' was the phrase. They took close counsel with the lady, she told them her impressions of the King's real views, and usually added some shrewd observations of her own. Her action seems to have been wholly beneficial; she appeased jealousies, conciliated animosities, administered common sense, spoke ill of nobody, and, so far as we can judge, was eminently good natured in the best sense of that tortured epithet. Perhaps her most useful function was that of acting as a conciliatory channel for those who had something to say to the King which they could not say themselves. Both Fox and Newcastle had at once hurried to her, as we have seen, when the crisis took place. And so Pitt now found it necessary to pay his first visit to her.

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[1] Harris, iii. 77.
[2] Grenville Papers, i. 178.
[3] Sir C. H. Williams, iii. 41.

He had heard perhaps that the King had said, 'I am sure Pitt will not do my business,' and had come to give soothing insinuations. But he also entertained a well-founded doubt as to whether he had fair play with the King, and whether he could trust Newcastle and Hardwicke to represent him fairly to the Sovereign.[1] So he came to Lady Yarmouth as his only means of direct communication with the Closet, and stated his real terms, handing her a written list of the men he proposed for office, a list which still exists.[2] He would not serve with Newcastle, but the King might find in getting rid of Newcastle that Hanover had other unsuspected friends.[3] But he also 'sent,' says Fox, 'the terms of a madman to the King.' They do not seem very mad to us: Ireland for Temple, the Exchequer for Legge, the Paymastership for George Grenville, the Irish Secretaryship for James Grenville, the Treasury for Devonshire. Townshend was to be Treasurer of the Chambers, Dr. Hay a Lord of the Admiralty, and places were to be found for George Townshend, Erskine, Lord Pomfret, and Sir Richard Lyttelton. For his colleague in the Secretaryship of State he proposed, most marvellous of all, Sir Thomas Robinson! The overture, however, irritated the King, partly from the demands, partly because it showed that people thought that he was influenced by Lady Yarmouth. 'Mr Pitt,' he said, 'shall not go to that channel any more. She does not meddle and shall not meddle.'[4] Nevertheless the hint dropped by Pitt was probably useful and fruitful. Pitt himself said afterwards that this interview put an end to the indecision of the King, who had remained sullen and passive.[5]

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[1] Shelburne, i. 83.

[2] Add. MSS. 35416; cf. Orford, ii. 257.

[3] Orford, ii. 259.

[4] Leadam, 445 note. Orford, ii. 259.

[5] Shelburne, i. 83 note.

The next point to be noted is Pitt's second interview with Hardwicke. And though the minute of Hardwicke's conversation with Pitt on October 19 appears to be lost, we have his record[1] of this second meeting between them on October 24, which he read to the King on October 26, and which contains the main points at issue.

Hardwicke began by telling Pitt that he had sent for him at the King's command; that he had on October 20 faithfully narrated to the King all that had passed at the interview of October 19, and that the King had summoned him on October 23, the day previous to the present meeting, in order to send the following message—

'The King is of opinion that what has been suggested is not for his and the public service.'

Pitt thereupon bowed and said that His Majesty did him the greatest honour in condescending to return any answer to anything that came from him. He then repeated the message word for word, and desired Hardwicke to bear in mind that all that he *had suggested* was by way of objection; that he had not suggested anything *affirmative* as to measures of any kind. Hardwicke replied that he had repeated to the King exactly what had passed, and recapitulated the five heads under which Pitt had summed up the previous conversation.

'1. That it was impossible for him to serve with the Duke of Newcastle.

'2. That he thought enquiries into the past measures absolutely necessary, that he thought it his duty to take a considerable share in them, and could not lay himself under any obligation to depart from that.

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[1] Add. MSS. 35870. 'Powis Ho., October 24, 1756. Sunday night.'

'To this I said that the King was not against a fair and impartial enquiry.

'3. That he thought his duty to support a Militia Bill, and particularly that of the last session.

'I told him that the King and his ministers were not against *a* Militia Bill.

'4. That the affair of the Hanoverian soldier[1] he thought of great importance; that what had been done ought to be examined, and, he thought, censured.

'5. That if he came into His Majesty's service, he thought it necessary, in order to serve him, and to support his affairs, to have such powers as belonged to his station, to be in the first concert and concoction of measures, and to be at liberty to propose to His Majesty himself anything that occurred to him for his service, originally, and without going through any other minister.'

Pitt, who was evidently disappointed, acknowledged the accuracy of Hardwicke's recital, and desired to know if the message from the King was *an answer to the whole.* Hardwicke replied that it was the King's answer in the King's own words,[1] and that he could not take on himself to explain it; but that he understood it as *an answer to everything that had been conveyed by Mr. Pitt to the King.*

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[1] This poor Hanoverian victim, as completely as Andersen's Tin Soldier, has melted into nothingness. But he once caused a mighty stir. He bought four handkerchiefs, and by mistake, as was universally conceded, took the whole piece, which contained six. Yet he was put in prison on a charge of theft. His commanding officer demanded his enlargement. Failing in this attempt, he obtained a warrant from Holdernesse for his release. The whole country was aflame in an instant with the old hostility to German mercenaries, Holdernesse was severely threatened, and the innocent soldier cruelly flogged. See Orford, ii. 248–9.

To this Pitt rejoined with thanks for the King's condescension that he would say to Hardwicke, '*as from one private gentleman to another,*' that he would not come into the service, in the present circumstances of affairs, upon any other terms for the whole world.

'I then,' continues the Chancellor, 'said that undoubtedly He must judge for himself; But I would also say to Him, *as from Lord Hardwicke only to Mr. Pitt*—

'That, as He professed great Duty to the King & Zeal for his Service, & I dared to say had it; That as He had expressed an Inclination to come into his Majesty's service, in order *really* to assist in the support of his Government;

'That as He was a Man of Abilities & knowledge of the World; That, as Men of Sense, who wish the End, must naturally wish the means; why would He at the same time make *the thing* impracticable?

'To This He answered that he would say to me *in the same private manner* That he was surprized that it should be thought possible for Him to come into an Employment to serve with the D. of Newcastle, under whose Administration the things he had so much blamed had happened, & against which the Sense of the Nation so strongly appeared; & I think he added,—which Administration could not possibly have lasted, if he had accepted.

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[1] Strangely enough there is a different answer appended to this report.

'That H.M. had been desirous, in this time of difficulty, to have the assistance of Mr. Pitt in his service, and for that purpose to consider him and those connected with him in a proper manner. That H.M. continues in the same disposition, tho' what has been suggested by Mr. Pitt will not in the King's opinion form a system for carrying on H.M.'s service.'

This may have been the first draft, and it may have been found, as usual, that the less said the better.

'In answer to That I said some general things in the same sense with what I had mentioned on that head on Tuesday last.

'He then rose up & we parted with great personal Civility on both sides.'

Meanwhile Newcastle, proscribed by Pitt and spurned by Fox, knew not whither to turn. He broke out in a wail against them to the Chancellor, the keeper of his conscience even more than of the King's. 'My dearest Lord,' he writes (October 20, 1756), 'tho' a consciousness of my own innocence and an indifference as to my own situation may, and I hope in God will, support me against all the wickedness and ingratitude which I meet with, yet your Lordship cannot think that I am unmindful of or senseless to the great indignity put upon me by these two gentlemen.' Newcastle in the character of a Christian martyr, the prey of heathen raging furiously, has something humorous and incongruous about it, were the attitude less abject. But in a sentence or two he returns to a more familiar character. 'Allow me only to suggest to your Lordship the necessity of making the King see that the whole is a concert between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox. The news and principles upon which they act are the same, viz., to make themselves necessary, and masters of the King . . . . that the only thing Mr. Pitt alledges against me is the *conduct of the war.*' . . . . 'Quit before the Birthday I must and will.' He goes on to consult the Chancellor as to whether he shall ask any favours for his relations.[1]

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[1] Partly given in Harris, iii. 80.

So the falling Minister in his straits tried to play upon the King's two strongest passions, fear of being dominated and fear for Hanover. How wise Pitt was to go straight to Lady Yarmouth! But Newcastle had tried other measures as well after Fox's resignation. The very day he received it he had hurried to his old enemy Granville, now comfortably ensconced in the Presidency of the Council, and offered to exchange offices with him, giving him his friend Fox as Chancellor of the Exchequer.[1] Granville, he remembered, had once been willing to face far greater hazards with Pulteney. But Granville was ten years older; he had, to use his own expression, put on his nightcap; and he laughed the suppliant Duke out of the room. 'I will be hanged a little before I take your place,' he said, not perhaps without some relish for his chief's terror and distress, 'rather than a little after.' But he added more gravely that '*we* must determine either to give Mr. Fox what he wants, or to take in Mr. Pitt; who,' Newcastle adds piteously, 'will not come.'[2] Then Newcastle tried Egmont and Halifax. Egmont was willing to take the seals with a British peerage. But it was in the House of Commons that strength was wanted. No such strength was to be found without Pitt or Fox. Dupplin, one of the Paymasters, an able man of business and much in Newcastle's confidence, said broadly and truly, 'Fox and Pitt need only sit still and laugh, and we must walk out of the House!' And yet the House of Commons was almost unanimous in devotion to the Minister. Was there ever so strange a situation?

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[1] Newcastle to Hardwicke, Oct. 13, 5 o'clock, 1756. Add. MSS. 32868, f. 251.

[2] Ib.

In view of this last fact Hardwicke urged Newcastle to hold on; and Lyttelton, to inspirit him, offered to accept any office. This well-intentioned proposal failed to animate the Duke, though it was gratefully recognised. There was nothing left but the rank and file; ardent supporters with nothing to support. The Government was doomed.

Instructions from counties and boroughs were coming up as in the days of the impeachment of Walpole. Addresses were presented to the Throne. The country was thoroughly roused. And its hopes and gaze were fixed solely on Pitt, a private member, untried in affairs, with scarce a follower in Parliament. He, at any rate, had not failed, a negative merit indeed, but one which he alone of the leading statesmen of the time could claim.

Newcastle was left alone with Hardwicke. Around them that desert had begun to form which portends the fall of a Ministry; though their faithful Commons still awaited their bidding in silence. And at last the old Duke realised that he must resign, but determined that Hardwicke should resign too, perhaps to make his own resignation regretted, perhaps because he would not leave behind him an asset of such value. 'My dearest, dearest Lord,' he wrote, 'you know how cruelly I am treated and indeed persecuted by all those who now surround the King.' Hardwicke's friendship, he said, was now his only comfort, Hardwicke's resignation would be his honour, glory, and security. 'But, my dearest Lord, it would hurt me extremely if yours should be long delayed.' And indeed, Hardwicke, to the regret of all, consented to leave the woolsack and follow his friend. Newcastle was shrewd enough to know that under the existing conditions in Parliament he could scarcely fail soon to return to office. But Hardwicke did not return.

When the King was sure that Newcastle was really going, he sent for Fox and bade him try if Pitt would join him. 'The Duke of Newcastle whom you hate will retire,' said the Sovereign; 'try your hand and see what you can do with Pitt.'[1] Oct. 28, 1756. Next day Fox went to the Prince's levee at Saville House, and engaged Pitt in close and animated conversation for some twenty minutes. 'Mr. Pitt exceeding grave, Mr. Fox very warm. They did not seem to part amicably.'[2] Of this talk a famous fragment survives, characteristic of political language in those days. 'Are you going to Stowe?' asked Fox. 'I ask because I believe you will have a message of consequence from people of consequence.' 'You surprise me,' answered Pitt, 'are you to be of the number?' 'I don't know,' said Fox, taken aback. 'One likes to say things to a man of sense,' rejoined Pitt, 'and to men of your great sense, rather than to others. And yet it is difficult even to you.' Fox caught his hint at once. 'What! You mean that you will not act with me as Minister.' 'I do,' replied Pitt. But a moment after he felt that he had been too abrupt, and expressed a courteous hope that Fox would take an active part, which his own health would not permit him to do.[3]

Was Pitt right in refusing the concurrence of Fox? On that question we must allow him to be the best judge, as it is obvious that he did not act in heat or passion, and that we cannot know the situation as he did. To us now, viewing the poverty of his following and the useful abilities of Fox, it would seem that he made a palpable mistake. Fox would have taken the second place; as a matter of fact he was content to subside into the gilded subordination of the Paymastership. His talents as a debater were second only to Pitt's with the possible exception of Charles Townshend's; but Townshend was only a shooting star, and did not, like Fox, represent the important influence of Cumberland. Fox would have fought stolidly for the side he espoused; he had a leaning to Pitt, and shared Pitt's detestation of Newcastle, who was the common enemy. But Pitt evidently had determined that he must sever himself entirely from Newcastle and Newcastle's Minister in the House of Commons. On both these rested the taint of corruption and national disaster. He must, if he was to keep the confidence of the country, cut himself clear from these personalities and their traditions. He could estimate the weight of odium which rested upon them, which we cannot. He had all the facts of the case before him, which we have not. He knew, what we do not know for certain but cannot doubt, that Leicester House made the exclusion of Fox or of Cumberland in any form a condition of cordial support. He realised the weakness of his own parliamentary position, he well understood the value of Fox's co-operation, but he also knew the temper of the nation, and so we cannot doubt that he came to the right decision.

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[1] Digby to Lord Digby, Oct. 28. 1756. Wingfield MSS. in Hist. MSS.

[2] West to Newcastle, Newcastle MSS.

[3] Orford, ii. 262.

In any case Fox was not to blame. He offered, and we think cordially offered, to co-operate with Pitt, and, indeed, serve under Pitt. Public spirit perhaps was not his main motive. He did not, he confessed, feel equal to the principal place. He had written in July: 'Though I see how fatally things are going, as I don't know how to mend them, I am not unreasonable enough to wish for what I could not conduct.'[1] And things were much worse now. Moreover, he saw, as others saw, that it was only the combination of himself with Pitt that could keep out Newcastle. But in public affairs the best and fairest course is not to analyse motives. He made the offer, he made it sincerely, and must have the credit of it.

But Pitt was inflexible. Those who had made him feel the weight of their proscription should feel the weight of his. Fox would have liked to be Paymaster. In that subordinate but opulent post he would have been content to give support. But Pitt would have none of him. He refused him this slight favour on the mysterious ground that it 'would be too like Mr. Pelham in 1742.'[2] He would not touch Fox or Newcastle.

The day after Fox's conversation with Pitt at the levee, the King sent for Devonshire, and bade him form a Ministry. This Duke was now Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Fox's closest friend. The King probably hoped in this way to bring about the union between Pitt and Fox, which almost every one desired, save Pitt himself. Pitt himself had nominated Devonshire, but without consulting him, in the interviews with Hardwicke. Devonshire had written to Fox in approval of the resignation as soon as he had heard of it. Five days afterwards he wrote again: 'If my friendship or assistance can be of any use you can command me,' and went on to say, 'Nothing has hurt Mr. Pitt so much as his having shown the world that in order to gratify his resentment and satisfy his ambition he did not value the confusion or distress that he might throw this country into. This I own has in some degree altered the good opinion I had of him.'[1] Devonshire therefore did not seem a propitious Prime Minister for Pitt. But dukes counted for much in those days. No one can read the history of those times without seeing the vast importance attributed to forgotten princes like Marlborough, Bedford, and Devonshire.

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[1] Fox to Ellis. July 15, 1755. Holland House MSS.

[2] Narrative to Kildare.

Fox soon quarrelled with Devonshire. He considered that Devonshire had abandoned him. The Duke had been his confidential friend, and had left him to help Pitt, and act as Pitt's figurehead. At first he affected to approve. But his wrath only smouldered. On one of the eternal questions of patronage it broke out. Fox wrote to him a note of real dignity and pathos. 'The Duke of Bedford has just now told me that Mr. John Pitt is to kiss hands to-morrow for Mr. Phillipson's place;' (promised, according to Fox, to his friend Hamilton). 'Consider, my Lord, everything that has pass'd, and do not drive me from you. I neither mean to do you harm, nor can do you harm if you think. But Your Grace's own reflections will not please you when you have done so.'[2] Devonshire was a weak man, but he was unconscious of blame and was deeply hurt. Political friendships, when paths diverge, are more difficult to maintain than men themselves realise at the moment of separation.

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[1] October 20, 1756. Holland House MSS.

[2] Holland House MSS.

Oct. 31, 1756. Devonshire was now sent to Pitt in the country,[1] but found that his terms were such as the King could not be brought to accept. He positively declined association with Fox in any shape, but deigned to apologise to the Duke for having nominated him without previous consultation. It was necessary, he said, to place some great lord there to whom the Whigs would look up, and his partiality had made him presume to suggest his Grace.[2]

Then the King, refusing Pitt's terms, and aware that he had been misinformed as to Fox's language about Bute, sent for Fox and offered him the government. 'I was never dishonest, rash, or mad enough for half an hour to think of undertaking it,' says Fox.[3] And again, 'I am not capable of it,' and goes on to give the reason. 'Richelieu, were he alive, could not guide the councils of a nation, if (which would be my case) he could not from November to April have above two hours in the four-and-twenty to think of anything but the House of Commons.'[4] If that were Fox's need in 1756, it is difficult to imagine the kind of physical and intellectual combination that he would have thought adequate to the stress of affairs in the twentieth century. But in spite of Fox's private opinion thus expressed, his friend Walpole records that he offered at the worst to take the Treasury and go to the Tower if it would save his Sovereign from having 'his head shaved.' 'Ah!' replied the King with his usual shrewdness, 'if you go to the Tower I shall not be long behind you.'[1]

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[1] Bubb, 389.

[2] Orford, ii. 263.

[3] Narrative to Kildare.

[4] Bedford Corresp. ii. 210.

Then the distracted monarch, at the instigation of Fox, tried the fatal expedient of an Assembly of Notables, and summoned all the leading nobles and commoners who were at hand to meet at Devonshire House.[2] But this meeting never took place, for Devonshire postponed or got rid of it. It was to have recommended that Devonshire should have the Treasury, Fox the Exchequer, and Legge be content with a peerage. Pitt himself was to have the seals, with *carte blanche* for his other friends and dependents. Temple was to be First Lord of the Admiralty.[3]

Fox declares that Devonshire put an end to this plan by positively refusing the Treasury.[4] Holdernesse sent word to Newcastle that *les Renardins* (the followers of Fox) were less sanguine.[5] And indeed, on November 4, the day after that fixed for the assembly, Devonshire went in to the King and came out from his audience having accepted the Treasury. Bubb says that he stipulated for Fox as Chancellor of the Exchequer.[6] This is at least doubtful. 'This question,' Fox afterwards wrote, I beg may be asked: whether at the time his Grace did take it with Legge I was not pressing him strongly to another thing, viz., to offer to take it with me. I pressed this even to ill-humour at his own house with Grenville at night. He refused absolutely, and the next morning what he would not take with me he took with Legge.'[1] This would seem conclusive, were it not that Bubb evidently had his information from Fox at the time; but politicians are prone to illusions on the subject of office. In any case, Devonshire left the Closet First Lord of the Treasury with Legge as Chancellor of the Exchequer; the man with whom two days before he had refused under any circumstances to serve,[2] and whom the King had absolutely refused to take. Fox and Bedford were in the anteroom as he came out, and were thunderstruck Bedford broke into passionate expostulation; Fox scented an intrigue. However, the deed was done.[3]

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[1] Orford, ii. 266.

[2] See the summonses in the Holland House MSS. For example, that to the Duke of Marlborough. 'Nov. 2, 1756. My dear Lord, H.M. desires Your Grace would without fail be in town to-morrow evening. You shall find at Marlbro' House a summons to the place of meeting, and I leave to Mr. Hamilton to acquaint Your Grace more fully than I have time to do with the intention of it. Adieu. The D. of Bedford is kept in town and all great Lords within reach are sent to.'

[3] Narrative to Kildare.

[4] Narrative to Kildare.

[5] Holdernesse to Newcastle, Nov. 2, 1756. Add. MSS. 32868.

[6] Bubb, 390.

Fox says that Devonshire offered him, and he refused, the Pay Office.[4] This is difficult to believe, and does not accord with his other statements that he had offered to serve in a subordinate capacity and been refused. Moreover, it was the office for which he always hankered, with its vast profits and safe obscurity, as compared with the Spartan frugality and dangerous prominence of the Secretaryship of State.[5]

As to the intrigue, Fox's instinct did not deceive him. The fact was that Horace Walpole, having heard of the scheme of the Notables, saw at once that it must put an end to the new arrangement, as it was one that Pitt could not accept. Walpole feared no doubt that, in case of failure, Newcastle, the object of his special detestation, might return to office. So he sent his cousin Conway to alarm the Duke of Devonshire, who consequently suppressed the meeting, and who went himself, as we have seen, to the King to accept office.[1] Horace might well pique himself on his powers of intrigue or duplicity, for a week before he had spontaneously written to Fox to say that he heard that the King and Lady Yarmouth were persuaded that Fox would not take the Treasury, but he hoped they were wrong.[2]

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[1] Fox to Marlborough, 1756. Holland House MSS.

[2] Bedford Corresp. ii. 208.

[3] Orford, ii. 269.

[4] Bedford Corresp. ii. 210.

[5] The salary and allowances of Secretary of State were 2680*l.*, as appears from a paper of Fox's. But there was also 3000*l.* for Secret Service which Fox appears to reckon as salary. H. H. MSS.

The new First Lord of the Treasury may have resisted having Legge as his Chancellor of the Exchequer, but was easily overborne. What is more difficult to understand is the King's nominating Legge, whom he detested. It was a rude shock for Fox, who had planned the meeting of Notables and framed the scheme it was to advise. Henceforth he controlled himself no more, and became the sleepless enemy of the new administration, which can be no matter of surprise. Pitt had made his total exclusion as absolute a condition as that of Newcastle, and Fox after his warm offers of co-operation and assistance could not but be bitterly mortified. He believed, perhaps justly, that the proscription laid on him proceeded from Leicester House.[3] Henceforth during the short life of the new government he plotted and planned against it, inspiring 'The Test,' a new paper under an old designation, with venomous articles, and ready to form alternative administrations at a moment's notice.[1]

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[1] Orford, ii. 268.

[2] Holland House MSS. H. Walpole to Fox, Oct. 27, 1756.

[3] Fox to Bedford, Nov. 23, 1756.

One great difficulty, the King's repugnance to Legge, had been surmounted one does not know how; but there were still minor obstacles. The whole arrangement was odious to the Sovereign: he could not bear even to turn the first page of Devonshire's appointments. Pitt, who was to succeed Newcastle in the Southern department, wished to exchange this for the Northern. The King objected, for the Northern department included Hanover, and Pitt eventually yielded. The new Secretary, as we have seen, wished for Sir Thomas Robinson, his old butt, as a colleague, on the singular ground that he knew nothing of the office he was undertaking, and required Sir Thomas's guidance.[2] Pitt had compared Robinson to a jack-boot; but personal opinions vary according to points of view; Sir Thomas might be contemptible as a leader, but useful as a dry-nurse. Holdernesse however remained. Then over every petty office, cofferership, masterships of the Wardrobe, keeperships of the jewels, treasurerships of the Household, there was snarling and struggling as of dogs over bones. Bedford was secured as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, mainly, it would appear, through the agency of Fox, who wished to secure as many ministerial posts as possible for his friends, and who was in hopes that the Duke would traverse Pitt. Bedford cared little for office; perhaps not much for Fox. His political passions were inspired by his personal hatreds, of Newcastle now, as later of Pitt.[3] But Fox, aided by the

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[1] H. H. MSS.

[2] Narrative to Kildare.

[3] Bedford Corr. ii. 170,220. Bedford to Fox, Nov. 17, 1755 (H. H. MSS.).

Duchess's ambition, prevailed. Amid these changes one provokes a smile; Bubb was as usual dismissed.

But the greatest and most grotesque disability lay with Pitt himself. After all his struggles to be in the position of forming a Ministry, he had no Ministry to produce. He could not fill a fraction of the offices. His personal followers, all told, hardly exceeded a dozen. When he had provided for the Grenvilles, Potter, and Legge, he had scarcely any one to name. So this Ministry was doomed from the beginning. Pamphleteers could not fail to observe Pitt's predicament. One lampoon, in the form of a royal degree, 'Given at our imperial seat at Hayes,' and countersigned 'John Thistle,' (a premature allusion to Bute), sets forth: 'We will that you give lucrative employments to all Our Brethren, uncles, cousins, relations and namesakes.'[1] Outside this category Pitt's subordinates were mostly the friends of Newcastle or Fox, and so his secret enemies, or waiters upon Providence who were not sufficiently sure of his stability to call themselves his friends. Holdernesse, Pitt's colleague in the Secretaryship of State, and Barrington, Secretary for War, kept Newcastle fully informed of all that went on in the administration and of all that they knew. Holdernesse also sent abstracts of the despatches that came from abroad.[2] So that Pitt was betrayed from the first. Ministries formed by one man seldom last long under another. But Ministries which pass between two declared enemies have not from the beginning any chance of life. This one was stillborn.

Pitt himself lay ill with the gout at Hayes; so he had to leave his affairs to be managed by a little clique in London, of which Temple of course was the chief, and which was in close communion with Leicester House. For every day Leicester House waxed and Kensington Palace waned in importance, as the King advanced in years. Nothing in the history of those days is more difficult to trace and yet nothing is more significant than this invisible Court of the Heir-Apparent, which was felt rather than seen, but towards which courtiers kept one anxious eye during their dutiful attendance on the King. All felt that the centre of power was shifting thither, and the uneasiness of those who wished to be well with both Courts was manifest and irrepressible. The constant anxiety of Fox to be Paymaster was largely due to his desire to be sheltered from the hatred of the young Court in the reign that seemed imminent. All this could not but increase the jealousy and irritability of the old Sovereign, at a time when he was undergoing a new Ministry most repulsive to him. Distasteful as it was in almost every respect, what was perhaps most abhorrent was the consciousness that it was imposed upon him by his daughter-in-law and her favourite, that it rested on their support, and was indeed the Ministry of George III. rather than of George II.

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[1] Holland House MSS.

[2] Add. MSS. 32869.

Bute was the object of the King's chief detestation, a righteous aversion if his suspicions were well founded; and Bute was now undisguisedly prominent in the negotiations for the new Government. The King treated Temple and his friends so ill at the levee, that the injured nobleman went to Devonshire to say that he feared he could not proceed a step further in the negotiations. On this mission he was accompanied by Bute, for the purpose, apparently, of making the world realise that Leicester

House and all its influence were behind Pitt. And Bute availed himself of this opportunity to make use of 'expressions so transcendently obliging to us,' writes Temple, 'and so decisive of the determined purposes of Leicester House towards us in the present or any future day, that your lively imagination cannot suggest to you a wish beyond them.' By Temple, too, he sent word to Pitt that he could not advise, that he left all to Pitt, determined to support and approve whatever Pitt decided.[1] This was the one element of strength to the new Government, besides Pitt himself. And yet, so elusive was this mysterious Court, that in September the town had been ringing with the coolness of Pitt's reception at Leicester House, more especially by Bute.[2] The fact is that there had evidently been a coldness, but that the fall of Newcastle had brought the two together again.[3]

After Devonshire had kissed hands on November 4 there were however few difficulties. Temple's cold reception at Court, on the very day of Newcastle's resignation, which had made him declare with his usual arrogance to Devonshire that all was over, was only a passing incident, due to the fact that the King could not abide the very sight of Temple. Pitt no doubt counselled moderation from Hayes, not desiring to lose the fruit of so many years for a slight to his relative. And so, a week after Temple's fiery declaration to Devonshire, the new Board of Admiralty was gazetted with Temple at its head. Three days before, the Board of Treasury had been declared with Devonshire and Legge as its chiefs. One Grenville was included in this. For George Grenville and Potter treasurerships and paymasterships were found. There were indeed but few traces of Pitt's small connection in the Government. He, still an invalid, received his seals a Dec. 4, 1756. little later. He had also to change his seat. He could not condescend to be re-elected for Newcastle's borough of Aldborough; indeed, he had held it too long. Nor indeed would Newcastle nominate him.[1] So now he accepted an olive branch from Lyttelton, who shared the control of Okehampton with the Duke of Bedford, and generously named his old friend and recent foe.[2] It may have been that Pitt was desirous of cutting the last link with Newcastle before entering upon office, and had deferred receiving the seals till he was independent. Be that as it may, he was only to hold them four months. During most of that time he was ill, during all of it he was surrounded by conspiracies, and he was soon intrigued out of office, though he never actually vacated it. But his short term had taught him one priceless lesson; that genius and public spirit were not enough, that a practical and even sordid leaven was required, and that if he would not do the necessary work of political adjustment himself, he must find somebody to do it for him, or give up all idea of being a powerful Minister.

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[1] Chatham Corr. i. 190–4.

[2] Newcastle to Hardwicke, Sept. 2, 1756. Add. MSS. 35416.

[3] Fox to Digby. Wingfield MSS. in Hist. MSS.

It has been thought well to narrate at length the circumstances of the final breakdown of the King's veto on Pitt's accession to office and the struggle which preceded it; partly because some of the documents are new, partly because it is a curious picture of character and intrigue, partly because it is the fifth and culminating act of this long drama.

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[1] 'As your Lordship is of opinion that I cannot (which is firmly my own) rechuse Mr. Pitt,' &c. Newcastle to Hardwicke, Nov. 3, 1756.

[2] 'Do you know that Sir George now Lord Lyttelton, who had engaged with the Duke of Bedford for one and one at Okehampton, named Pitt to His Grace as the man to be chosen in his room?' Fox to ——, Dec. 14, 1756 (H. H. MSS.).

CHAPTER XXII.

BUT with this Government we have nothing to do. We have reached our limits. The youth of Pitt has passed, his apprenticeship is over, he has now his foot in high office, he is soon to be supreme. The weary period of proscription and conflict has come to an end, he is henceforth to command where he has obeyed, and he is to raise his country to a singular height of glory and power. That splendid period is beyond the scope of this book, which only records the ascent and the toil; the lustre of achievement and reward require a separate chronicle. The next scenes require a broader canvas and brighter colours.

But before we leave him let us try and realise his appearance. When we read about any one we naturally wish to know what manner of man he was in the flesh. In this case we seem but scantily provided with portraits. We have glanced at the one by Hoare, to the accuracy of which Pitt himself bears emphatic testimony. Of this one Hoare painted several replicas, one of the worst of which, very bilious in colouring, is in the National Portrait Gallery. There is another at Orwell which seems to have more force in it; it could not have less. The original represents a comely, graceful and elegant being without a symptom of anything but comeliness, grace and elegance, and might be the portrait of any man of fashion of the time. Great men have sometimes piqued themselves on being dandies, and it may have been this air which recommended the picture to its subject. This portrait, of which the large engraving, containing only the head, is infinitely better than the original, duly arrived at Stowe. Thence at the dispersal of that great collection it passed to Drayton, having been purchased by Sir Robert Peel, and has lately found a final home at Pittsburg.

There is another portrait by Hoare, at full length, in the coronation robes which Pitt never can have worn, which was painted for the Corporation of Bath ten years after that for Temple. It leaves no special impression. There was a portrait by Reynolds at Belvoir. But that, alas! disappeared with so much else in the great fire which ravaged that noble structure. Towards the end of his life (in 1772) he was painted in peer's robes by Brompton. The engraving of this is at full length, but the picture itself is a kitcat, so that it was probably cut down. This picture is at Chevening, and Lord Sidmouth, if we are not mistaken, owns a replica or another version of this picture. Pitt's grand-daughter, Lady Hester Stanhope, who was brought up with it, says that it is the best portrait of him. As she was only two years old when he died, her testimony, though given with confidence, has no personal value; but she had relations who may have told her. She piqued herself on her resemblance to him. But no value is to be attached to the utterances of this vain and crazy woman, unless one can believe, which is difficult, that she repeated faithfully what more trustworthy people had told her. However, this portrait may well be the best, where the other is so poor.

It is in itself impressive, representing a solemn, noble, melancholy figure, such as Chatham must have been in his last cheerless decade.

There are more busts. There is one of him in youth, perhaps at five-and-twenty, handsome, bright, alert, with a smile that is almost saucy. The original of this was, it is believed, also at Stowe; also, perhaps, purchased by Sir Robert Peel. There is more than one by Wilton. One, dated 1759, grim and masterful, with a touch of scorn, the man himself at his time of power. There are others of him in old age, with less expression, ponderous and saturnine; they are posthumous, and dated 1781. One of these is at Dropmore, another at Belvoir, another at Lowther.

There are probably other portraits or busts, but these are all that are known to the present writer.

His appearance at his best must have been extremely attractive. Tall and slender, 'his figure genteel and commanding,' he had cultivated all the arts of grace, gesture and dramatic action. 'Graceful in motion,' says his reluctant nephew, 'his eye and countenance would have conveyed his feelings to the deaf.'[1] All authorities dwell on the magic of his eye. His eyes, said his grand-daughter, presumably on family tradition, were grey, but by candle-light seemed black from the intensity of their expression. When he was angry or earnest no one could look him in the face. No one indeed seems to have been able to abide the terrors of his glance.

Of his manners and conversation in private life we know singularly little. Chesterfield gives us perhaps the best glimpse. 'He had manners and address; but one might discern through them too great a consciousness of his own superior talents. He was a most agreeable and lively companion in social life, and had such a versatility of wit that he could adapt it to all sorts of conversation.' Of his early powers of fascination we have an authentic instance. He was seen walking with the Prince of Wales in the gardens at Stowe, and Cobham, watching them with anxiety, expressed some apprehension of Pitt's persuading the Prince to adopt some measures of which Cobham disapproved. A Mr. Belson said that the interview could not be long. 'You don't know Mr. Pitt's power of insinuation,' said Cobham. 'In a very short quarter of an hour he can persuade anyone of anything.'

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[1] Camelford.

Butler, 'the Reminiscent,' who had this anecdote from Belson himself, goes on to say that 'as a companion in festive moments, Mr. Pitt was enchanting.' He also quotes Wilkes, who was a good judge of social qualifications. 'Mr. Pitt, by the most manly sense and the fine sallies of a warm and sportive imagination, can charm the whole day, and, as the Greek said, his entertainments please even the day after they are given.' But, after all, these must have been rare occasions, as Pitt does not seem to have seen much of society, for his health kept him a recluse; and as years went on he seems to have found it both irksome and impolitic to see much of mankind. We fancy that he was a man, like his son, of small and intimate companies; partly from a haughty aloofness, partly because he could not partake of the pleasures of the table.

'As a private man,' says Lord Camelford, 'he had especially in his youth every talent to please when he thought it worth while to exert his talents, which was always for a purpose, for he was never natural. His good breeding never deserted him unless when his insolence intended to offend. He was, however, soon spoilt by flattery, which gave him the humours of a child. He was selfish even to trifles in his own family and amongst his intimates to the forgetting the preferences due to the other sex, of which I have heard many ridiculous instances; but this was much owing to a state of health which made him fretful, at the same time that it called his attention to his own person. When I first saw him he was intemperate towards his servants full as much as my own father, but it is to his honour that when he owed a better example to his children he got the better of that habit. His first and only friendships were with Lord Lyttelton and his sister Ann.' In a later passage he adds: 'He lived and died without a friend.'

Camelford, it will be observed, speaks with confidence about Pitt's youth, of which he can have known nothing except from tradition, and Pitt's family traditions were not likely to err on the side of benignity. What he says about early friendships is obviously inaccurate; he is quoting Pitt's impulsive note of Oct. 24, 1734.[1] The Grenvilles, the other Lytteltons, and Gilbert West at once occur to one as friends to whom Pitt in youth was tenderly attached. We may indeed take it for granted that this curious piece refers to Pitt's middle life, which Camelford knew personally; but it is too interesting to be omitted here.

His great and singular power lay in his eloquence, and yet even there we are left largely to the recollection and testimony of his contemporaries, for there was in those days no reporting as we understand it, and therefore no reports. There are, of course, professed reports, but to these little credence can be attached. Dr. Johnson and a Scottish clergyman named Gordon wrote a great number of them, based on very inadequate materials, if any materials at all. Men carried away some noble outburst or some striking metaphor tingling in their ears, and repeated it. Others would be able to recall the line of argument, if indeed there was an argument to follow. But the result is scarcely authentic. Pitt the younger must have known, and he declared that no specimens of his father's eloquence remained. Butler says that the person to whom he made this remark (no doubt Butler himself) begged him to read slowly his father's speeches on the Stamp Act, and endeavour as he did so to recall the figure, look and voice with which his father would have delivered them. Pitt did so, and admitted the probable effect of the speech thus delivered. But it is to be observed that he did not admit the accuracy. Almon, who knew something of this matter, says that none of the reports of Pitt's speeches before 1760 can be depended upon. In 1766 Almon began reporting the debates himself, and so would claim greater exactness, and may easily have attained it.

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[1] Supra, p. 75.

One is in fact thrown back on the impressions and the descriptions of those who heard him. Horace Walpole, who at this time admired Pitt as much as he could admire anybody, gives us striking glimpses, some of which we have already quoted; one of which, that of the answer to Hume Campbell, is exquisite in felicity of phrase. Chesterfield says that Pitt's 'eloquence was of every kind, and he excelled in the argumentative as well as in the declamatory way. But his invectives were terrible, and uttered with such energy of diction, and stern dignity of action and countenance that he intimidated those who were the most willing and the best able to encounter him. Their arms fell out of their hands, and they sank under the ascendant which his genius gained over theirs.' In a note Chesterfield tells us that the last phrases allude to Murray and Hume Campbell. 'Mr. Pitt,' he says elsewhere, 'carried with him unpremeditated the strength of thunder and the splendour of lightning.' These extracts convey the impression made by Pitt on one of the acutest judges of the time, himself an orator of eminence, and no friend to his subject.

Bishop Newton gladly avails himself of the same familiar metaphor: 'What was said of the famous orator Pericles, that he lightened, thundered, and confounded Greece, was in some measure applicable to him.' 'He had,' says the Bishop, 'extraordinary powers, quick conceptions, ready elocution, great command of language, a melodious voice, a piercing eye, a speaking countenance, and was as great an actor as an orator. During the time of his successful administration he had the most absolute and uncontrolled sway that perhaps any member ever had in the House of Commons. With all these excellences he was not without his defects. His language was sometimes too figurative and pompous, his speeches were seldom well connected, often desultory and rambling from one thing to another, so that though you were struck here and there with noble sentiments and happy expressions, yet you could not well remember nor give a clear account of the whole together. With affected modesty he was apt to be rather too confident and overbearing in debate, sometimes descended to personal invectives, and would first commend that he might afterwards more effectually abuse, would ever have the last word, and right or wrong still preserved (in his own phrase) an unembarrassed countenance. He spoke more to your passions than to your reason, more to those below the bar and above the throne than to the House itself; and, when that kind of audience was excluded, he sunk and lost much of his weight and authority.'[1]

Grattan's testimony, as that of a famous orator, cannot here be passed, though it refers to a later period. 'He was a man of great genius, great flight of mind. His imagination was astonishing. . . . . He was very great and very odd. He spoke in a style of conversation, not however what I expected. It was not a speech, for he never came with a prepared harangue. His style was not regular oratory, like Cicero or Demosthenes, but it was very fine and very elevated, and above the ordinary subjects of discourse. . . . . His gesture was always graceful. He was an incomparable actor. Had it not been so he would have appeared ridiculous. . . . . His tones were remarkably pleasing. I recollect his pronouncing one word "effete" in a soft charming accent. His son could not have pronounced it better. . . . . His manner was dramatic. In this it was said that he was too much the mountebank; but if so it was a great mountebank. Perhaps he was not so good a debater as his son, but he was a much better orator, a better scholar, and a far greater mind. Great subjects, great empires, great characters, effulgent ideas and classical illustrations formed the material of his speeches.' Grattan gives examples, and even notes of one of his speeches, but they are all outside our period.[2]

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[1] Works, i. 135.

[2] Life of Grattan, i. 234.

These notes on Pitt's oratory cannot well be omitted, though they are almost too familiar to quote. But there is one, never yet published, which is written by an intimate but merciless critic. Lord Camelford was only nineteen at the time when our narrative terminates, but he must already and for some years afterwards have been steeped in his uncle's eloquence, so that his description is of peculiar interest.

'In Parliament he never spoke but to the instant, regardless of whatever contradictions he might afterwards be reduced to, which he carried off with an effrontery without example. His eloquence was supported by every advantage that could unite in a perfect actor. Graceful in motion, his eye and countenance would have conveyed his feelings to the deaf. His voice was clear and melodious, and capable of every variety of inflection and modulation. His wit was elegant, his imagination inexhaustible, his sensibility exquisite, and his diction flowed like a torrent, impure often, but always varied and abundant. There was a style of conscious superiority, a tone, a gesture of manner, which was quite peculiar to him—everything shrunk before it; and even facts, truth and argument were overawed and vanquished by it. On the other hand, his matter was never ranged, it had no method. He deviated into a thousand digressions, often reverted back to the same ground, and seemed sometimes like the lion to lash himself with his own tail to rouse his courage, which flashed in periods and surprised and astonished, rather than convinced by the steady light of reason. He was the very contrast of Lord Mansfield, his competitor in eloquence, who never appealed but to the conviction of the understanding, with an arrangement so precise that every sentence was only the preparation for the force that the next was to obtain, and scarce a word could be taken away without throwing the whole argument into disorder; the other bore his hearers away by rapid flights into a region that looked down upon argument, and opposed the transport of feeling to conviction.'

This appears to be a description as accurate as it is vivid, and perhaps none gives the personality and manner of Pitt with more effect. The style of conscious superiority, peculiar to him, before which everything shrank; the way in which the orator worked himself into wrath, like a lion lashing himself with his own tail; the eye and countenance which would have conveyed his meaning to the deaf; these are touches which we feel to be accurate, and which seem to explain much of the effect of Pitt's oratory. Let us here note that Cradock gives a curious account of an oratorical failure of Pitt's in later life and of his consequent irritation, eminently comforting to humbler speakers.[1]

We value sketches like these much more than any professed reports of Pitt's speeches, which cannot be accurate reproductions. But, even if they were, they would, we are told, be but pale shadows of the reality, for so much depended on the soul and grace with which they were uttered; for the majesty of his presence, his manly figure, his exquisite voice, his consummate acting, his harmonious action, and above all the lightning of his eyes inspired reluctant awe before he uttered a word. We can fancy him rising in the House, which subsides at once into silence and eager attention. On not a few faces there will be uneasiness and alarm; on the ministerial bench some agitation, for it is there probably that the thunderbolts may fall. His opening is solemn and impressive. Then he warms to his subject. He states his argument. He recalls matters of history and his own personal recollections. Then with an insinuating wave of his arm his voice changes, and he is found to be drowning some hapless wight with ridicule. Then he seems to ramble a little, he is marking time and collecting himself for what is coming. Suddenly the rich notes swell into the fullness of a great organ, and the audience find themselves borne into the heights of a sublime burst of eloquence. Then he sinks again into a whisper full of menace which carries some cruel sarcasm to some quivering heart. Then he is found playing about his subject, pelting snowballs as he proceeds. If the speech is proceeding to his satisfaction it will last an hour or perhaps two. Its length will perhaps not improve it, but no one can stir. There may be ineffective, tedious, obscure passages, but no one knows what may be coming, these vapours often precede a glowing sunburst. So all through the speech men sit as though paralysed, though many are heated with wine. He will not finish without some lofty declamation which may be the culminating splendour of the effort. If any effective replies are made, he will reply again and again, heedless of order, vehement, truculent, perhaps intemperate. And as he sits down perhaps with little applause, the tension of nerves, almost agonising in its duration and concentration, snaps like a harpstring; the buzz of animated conversation breaks forth with an ecstasy of relief. The audience disperses still under the spell. As it wears off, hostile critics begin to declare that it is all acting; the fellow acts better than Garrick. Garrick, indeed, himself declared that had Pitt originally preferred the stage of Drury Lane for that of St. Stephen's, he would almost have annihilated the stage by distancing all competition.[1] He was, without doubt, an incomparable actor, for no less a power would have enabled him to engage in some of his most famous flights with effect, or without reaction or ridicule. His action, his inflections, his vehemence are no doubt at least as good as Garrick's. But these are merely the accessories which to the shallow or cynical observer seem to be the heart or the whole of the matter. One might as well say that it is the varnish that makes the picture, or the goblet that makes the vintage. The orator is probably unconscious or at most half-conscious of what seems dramatic, he is moved by an irresistible blast of passion which carries him as well as his audience away. The passion may have been stirred beforehand, but at the moment of outpouring it is genuine enough. Pitt no doubt had trained himself to be graceful in animation, had studied and enhanced the beauties of his voice, so that when excited his tones were always musical, and his action harmonious. He may in earlier days have rehearsed speeches in private, though he probably delivered something different when the time came. But to imagine that when he spoke he was acting a prepared speech is to ignore the main features of his oratory, the force coming from an internal impulse which was for the moment irresistible. It should be remembered too, that in one sense he was always acting in the common business of life; when he chipped an egg, or talked to his gardener, or mounted his horse, he was acting. He might not, indeed, study his gesture at the moment, but that was because he had been studying gestures half his life. He had appropriated the dramatic way of doing things till it had become a second nature to him; thus, what would have been acting in others was natural to him. And indeed, he had so adjusted and prepared and schooled himself, that all his emotions were effectually concealed. The fierce character of the man would sometimes be irrepressible, but even then it would be vented with an awful grace. And so when he was said to be acting in the House he was natural, for acting had become a second nature to him. When this is so, acting has ceased to be acting. Mrs. Siddons would give her orders at dinner in the awful tones of Lady Macbeth. This was not acting but nature, trained but unconscious nature. So it was with Pitt. He would not laugh, because it was undignified to laugh. If he had a book or a play to read aloud and came to a comic part, he passed it to another to read and resumed the volume when the humorous part was over, lest, we may presume, he should smile or become incidentally ridiculous. His countenance was, so to speak, enamelled with such anxious care, that a heedless laugh might crack the elaborate demeanour. And so he lived in blank verse, and conducted himself in the heroic metre. We should surmise, though not with certainty, that some of his more famous flights, such as the comparison of the Rhone and the Saône, were prepared to some extent, but that there was nothing written. This is only guesswork, for of his method of preparation we know nothing. But his diction was habitually perfect. To improve it he had twice read through Bailey's Dictionary, and had plodded through masses of sermons, particularly those of Barrow, Abernethy, and 'the late Mr. Mudge of Plymouth.'[1] 'Every word he makes use of,' said Chesterfield as early as 1751, 'is the very best, and the most expressive that can be used in that place.' That was the result of constant and familiar effort. Like Bolingbroke he had trained himself to spare no pains in ordinary conversation to attain accuracy of expression, so as to be sure of himself in public. 'It would not be believed how much trouble he took to compose the most trifling note.' He told Shelburne that a phrase he had used in one of his speeches could not be taken exception to, as he had tried it on paper three times before employing it in public. Assiduous study of words, constant exercise in choice language, so that it was habitual to him even in conversation, and could not be other than elegant even in unpremeditated speech, this combined with poetical imagination, passion, a mordant wit and great dramatic skill, would probably seem to be the secrets of Chatham's oratorical supremacy. And yet it is safe to predict that a clever fellow who had mastered all this would produce but a pale reflection of the original. It is not merely the thing that is said, but the man who says it which counts, the character which breathes through the sentences. Mirabeau would, as we know, take a manuscript speech produced by a laborious friend, in itself a dull thing, and read it from the tribune with such

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[1] Cradock's Literary Memoirs, i. 100–1.

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[1] Foote's Table Talk, p. 103.

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[1] Seward's Anecdotes, ii. 357.

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energy of inspiration that it would carry the Assembly by storm. This is the more marvellous when we remember that a man who reads the best possible speech with the most effective elocution is heavily handicapped. And so it may safely be assumed that imitation of Pitt would be doomed to disastrous failure. The secret of oratory like this evades the most anxious student: its effect both on the immediate audience and on posterity seems beyond definition or adequate explanation.

Some orators impress their audience, some their readers, a very few posterity as well. The orators who impress their audience rarely impress their readers, and those who impress their readers are usually less successful with their audience. Few indeed are those who reach posterity or indeed survive a year. Pitt, if any one indeed can be said to have read his speeches, combined all three forms of supremacy. More than this, his utterances with a sort of wireless telegraphy seemed to thrill the nation which neither heard nor read them. In the century which followed Chatham's death there was an illustrious succession of orators and debaters. And yet none of these eminent men with all their accurately reported speeches have left so deep an impress of eloquence as the elder Pitt, who was not reported at all. We cannot doubt that it is better for his fame that he was unreported. Sheridan never did anything wiser than when in his need he refused the most splendid offers to revise his Begum speech for publication. Pitt's speeches would have lost half their force without the splendour of delivery. His unreported eloquence has become matter of faith, and so it is likely to remain.

Mr. Lecky, from whom it is difficult to differ, thinks that his speeches were deficient in pathos and wit. As to this last, the testimony of his contemporaries is emphatic the other way, and they are loud in extolling Pitt's piercing wit. We have seen how Walpole and Murray concur in extolling his powers of ridicule. 'He can turn anything into ridicule,' Murray had said. 'He can tickle to death with a feather,' was Walpole's description. Nor should we imagine he was defective in pathos; not perhaps in youth, for youth is not the season of pathos, but certainly in later years. The speeches, for example, delivered in the garb of an invalid, abounded we should surmise in pathos, to which the costume was preliminary and accessory. But pathos, which has something of humility in its tenderness, was, it must be admitted, alien to the haughty superiority which Pitt asserted and assumed.

One word more of fascinating conjecture. Would he have been a great popular orator at mass meetings and the like? We cannot imagine Pitt a platform speaker, yet we can scarcely imagine a better. His graceful appearance, his terrible eye, the winning and majestic modulations of his voice, his spontaneity, his magnetic power, his wealth of ridicule, his poignant personalities, his dramatic force, his variety and unexpectedness constituted the most formidable equipment for platform oratory ever possessed by mortal man. And yet we cannot regret that he never was tried.

Pitt's life marks itself out with singular distinctness into definite periods. From 1708 to 1734 is the period of obscure youth, on which this volume should throw some light. From 1734 to 1745 is the period of reckless and irresponsible opposition, when he is trying the temper of his weapons. From 1745 to 1754 he remains in the shadow of subordinate office. From 1754 to 1756, though still partly in office, he emerges as an independent figure of extraordinary and irresistible force. From 1756 to 1761 is the period of power, four years of which are unrivalled in the annals of Great Britain. From 1761 to 1770 is the period of detachment, or attempted detachment, from party. It includes some tenure of office, much obscurity and illness, some actual insanity. And from 1770 till his death in 1778 he appears sometimes to be attempting to make his peace with the party system, having found it impracticable to stand alone; sometimes he seems to be retiring once more into his cell.

Few careers can be marked out so clearly; few have such a glamour. But the glamour and the glory are yet to come; they lie beyond this book. Already indeed there are confidence and hope, confidence in his vigour, his honesty, and his uprightness; but this is due rather to others than to himself. Every one else has failed, this may be the man of destiny.

And yet up to this time the career of Pitt has been, eloquence apart, not unlike that of other ambitious and not very scrupulous politicians. He begins by attacking Sir Robert Walpole. Why? He has no particular objection to Sir Robert Walpole; in after years he acknowledges that he was a great statesman. It was partly a freak of youth. Who is the biggest man to attack, the man by combating whom one can acquire the most honour and reputation? Obviously Walpole. So tilt at him. He is asked to an important house; for the first time he finds himself in the great world. He is caressed, perhaps flattered; for he has a school renown, and is a lad to be secured. He is with his Eton friends, and they think all the world of Cobham, his wisdom, his courage, his magnificence; they all in a measure depend on him. Thus he is allured into the charmed circle, and they form much the same group as that which was in our own days called the Fourth Party.

So they enter the House of Commons in high spirits, and lay about them with reckless intrepidity. Pitt is soon marked out for martyrdom by the Minister. But in a short time he is conspicuous for other reasons. He towers from the waist above his comrades as a bitter, incisive speaker. Walpole begins to take notes of his speeches; he is the coming man, and is at once secured for the faction of the Prince of Wales. Then Walpole falls. There is a great crash, and the spectators expect to see the world in ruins. But when the dust has cleared away it is seen that things are much as they were; Wilmington, scarcely visible, in Walpole's seat; Newcastle rooted in his own; Walpole, with Pulteney his protagonist, seated smug and dumb among the distant peers. There is no room for Pitt among our governors; the only new figure that strikes one is Carteret, he is evidently the moving spirit of the piece. As the prominent Minister, and as an object of hatred to Cobham, he is obviously the man for Pitt now to attack, and he trounces Carteret as recklessly as he had Walpole; only Walpole was able to reply, and Carteret cannot; for he sits where Walpole sits. Carteret, again, he mainly attacks for his eminence. He calls Carteret execrable now, but, when the battle is over, takes pride in declaring that to his patronage, to his friendship, to his instruction 'I owe whatever I am.' Still, the business of party must be done, and so Carteret must be assailed. Then Carteret disappears, and Pitt is without a target. But the young man has to realise that in his reckless onslaughts he has incidentally but mortally wounded the honour of the King. Walpole and Carteret are off the scene; and the stage is now occupied, so far as he is concerned, by a monarch who is an incarnate veto as regards him, and who can never forgive him. This produces a new situation. Pitt is as strenuous to be pardoned as he was to offend; he is all milk and honey in public, but apprises the Pelhams, who are now in sole possession of the administration, that he is not disposed to be long-suffering, and that the ordinary rewards of political warfare are overdue. They are fully alive to the situation, and attempt to mollify the Sovereign. But their labour is in vain, and so, with more subtlety than patriotism, they produce a ministerial crisis when civil war is alive in the island. The King has to yield, and, in angry submission, receive Pitt. The new placeman, having achieved office, subsides into a long silence. Pelham dies at last, and the great inheritance has to be divided. Pitt is ill and absent; his rival is at once preferred (though alienated); while Pelham's brother attempts to guide, with the help of the Master of the Great Wardrobe, what Pelham could not control. The result is easily foreseen. The rivals unite to tear the Master limb from limb, and one of them has to be bought off. That one is not Pitt. And now something, pique or patriotism or marriage, one cannot analyse it now, perhaps he could not have analysed it himself, lifts him into new splendours of eloquence. His rival seems cowed by the harness without the confidence of office. Pitt stands alone, no one dare face him. Meanwhile he receives new authority from disaster. In every region where Britain is interested calamity follows calamity. The country is roused to a passion of wrath and vengeance. It demands victims. Byng in prison remains an open wound to remind the nation of its miscarriages. They are resolved to shoot him, at any rate; they would not be unwilling to hang others whom they hold responsible for his miscarriage, who are perhaps corrupt, and who are certainly incapable and untoward Ministers; failing that, they will at least get rid of them. They look round and see no one but Pitt. He has been persecuted, he has been ignored by these Ministers, and yet his eloquence, commanding in itself, has the true note of energy and patriotism. He shall be tried; and they call for him with as much energy as the French once called for Necker, but with a truer instinct.

Strangely enough, there is so far little vigour in Pitt except in his speeches. Half his life is spent in prostration and seclusion, under the martyrdom of gout. As we have seen, on the very brink of his Ministry, he assured Fox that his health would not allow him to hold office. And, indeed, in the whole life of this singular man there is nothing more remarkable than this, that in the glimpses we obtain of himself, apart from great speeches and the result of victorious policy, we almost always find him prostrate with illness. It is generally the gout or its allies which disable him; but later it is disorder akin to if not identical with insanity. Not unnaturally, even among those less prone by profession to suspicion than the expert politician, his ill-health is often supposed to be an assumption or a screen. But in this calmer generation we can see that it was not, that the man never enjoyed health, as it is ordinarily understood, for a moment. He was always distempered, irritable, or hysterical, when not in pain. His public life was scarcely more than the intervals between fits of gout or nervous collapse. We are reminded of the sufferings of his son, as he approached the end of a long ministerial career, struggling against constant sickness and a wrecked constitution, when we contemplate the lifelong contest between the elder Pitt and hereditary disease.

Heredity counts for much, for more than we reckon in these matters. We breed horses and cattle with careful study on that principle; the prize bull and the Derby winner are the result. With mankind we heed it little or not at all. With Pitt it was everything or almost everything. From his ancestors, most probably the Governor, who, we infer, was a free liver in a tropical climate, he derived the curse of gout. From the same progenitor he inherited a nervous, violent temperament, and some taint of madness. All this told partly for him, partly against him. The gout drove him to study and reflection, but it constantly disabled him. His temperament roused him to great heights of energy and passion both in eloquence and politics, but it also alienated his fellow-men, and made him sometimes eccentric, and sometimes turbulent. We cannot in such a matter hold the balance. What is genius? None can tell. But may it not be the result in character of the conflict of violent strains of heredity, which clash like flint and steel, and produce the divine spark?

This takes us beyond our limits, more especially those of time; for within those limits the genius of Pitt has only been displayed in the barren gift of eloquence. But when we consider his disabilities of heredity and of accident we deem him already heroic. Everything has been against him. He has contended against poverty and disease and contempt. He has been wounded in the house of his family. He has been constantly betrayed. He has had to suffer for long years in silence. He is forty-eight when he at last attains anything like power. From this point of view his career is pathetic. It seems such a waste of time and opportunity. But through these long impatient years he was being trained, hardened, one may almost say, baked in the furnace. In silence and bitterness the force was being accumulated that was to electrify the Empire.

Still the dazzling result must not blind us to the facts as they stand at the moment when we are surveying and taking leave of them. Much in a man's life obviously depends on life: much too depends on death. 'Felix opportunitate mortis' is a pregnant saying. How many village Hampdens, how many Miltons have passed away, inglorious because mute, and mute from premature death. Had Cæsar or Marlborough died before middle age their military reputation would have been slender indeed. For how many men, on the other hand, has death come too late. What would have been the place in history of Napoleon III., had Orsini been a successful assassin? What that of Tiberius, had he died at sixty? The authors who have survived themselves are as the sands of the sea; indeed the exceptions are those who have not. The politicians in the same case are less conspicuous, for they crumble into the House of Lords. Historians and rhetoricians have vied with each other in setting forth the glories of Pitt's supreme years. What we have to consider is his position in 1756, when we part from him in professed ignorance of what is to come. How would Pitt appear to us had he died when he was still forty-seven? He was forty-eight the day before Devonshire, in his name, assumed the government. That is a respectable age. The younger Pitt never reached it, though he had been Prime Minister for near a score of years. Napoleon closed his career at forty-six. It is needless to detail examples. But at forty-seven the elder Pitt could only claim that he had been Paymaster of the Forces, and had cowed but not persuaded the House of Commons by his oratory. He had, too, the faith of the people, unearned except by vague echoes of purity and eloquence. Otherwise his career had been much like other careers, denouncing, or coquetting and even pressing for office, equable in expectation, and vindictive if refused. Pride was his besetting sin; yet he had stooped, to conquer.

All seems to depend on this point, so difficult to decide: was there patriotism in all this alloy? Was the anxiety for office the mere craving of the politician for reward, or was it the real consciousness of capacity, purity, and inspiration? It may well in earlier days have been the more vulgar ambition, vulgar but not reprehensible; for office is the legitimate end and object of the public man; and Pitt had earned it a hundred times over by ordinary standards, while compelled to stand aside and see his inferiors promoted. But at the period which we have reached we think the nobler sentiment is unmistakable. He will not hold out a finger, he spurns all assistance, he builds without any foundation but himself. Had he wished only for the snug and secure possession of office he would have welcomed the co-operation of Newcastle and

Fox, invaluable allies in their different ways. But at this time he will have none of them, he dreams of a government which free from taint or suspicion shall appeal for the confidence of the country on the highest and purest grounds.

Here we feel, and feel with relief, that we can give a clear verdict. The rest matters little. The path of the statesman rarely skirts the heights, it is rough, rugged, sometimes squalid, as are most of the roads of life. We are apt to make idols, to ignore shadows, and to fancy that we see stars; not too apt, for it is an illuminating worship. But, that being so, let not those who have to scrutinise therefore condemn. All careers have their blots. The best and happiest are those in which the blemishes are obscured by high achievement. That was supremely the case with Pitt. His upward ascent was much like other ascents, neither better nor worse. But when he reached the summit, and acted in full light and freedom, his triumph was so complete that none deem it worth while to scan his previous record. None should care now, were it not a healthy propensity to seek to know as much as possible of the lives of great men. It is preposterous to depict Pitt as an angel of light. But yet, judged by the standard of his day, the only proper standard to apply, and indeed by the standard of any day, he must be held even in his darkest hours not to have compromised his historical future.

Whatever his failings may have been, his countrymen have refused, and rightly refused, to take heed of them. They have refused to see anything but the supreme orator, the triumphant Minister of 1757–1761, the champion of liberty in later years at home and in the West.

With Pitt, as with Nelson, his country will not count flaws. What do they matter? How are they visible in the sunlight of achievement? A country must cherish and guard its heroes.

We have climbed with him in his path to power. We have seen him petulant, factious, hungry, bitter. And yet all the time we have felt that there was always something in him different in quality from his fellow-politicians when they aired the same qualities, that there was an imprisoned spirit within him struggling for freedom and scope. At last it bursts its trammels, he tosses patronage and intrigue to the old political Shylocks, and inspires the policy of the world. Vanity of vanities! Twenty years after his epoch of glory, three years after his death, Britain has reached the lowest point in her history. But still she is the richer for his life. He bequeaths a tradition, he bequeaths a son; and when men think of duty and achievement they look to one or the other. It will be an ill day for their country when either is forgotten.

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